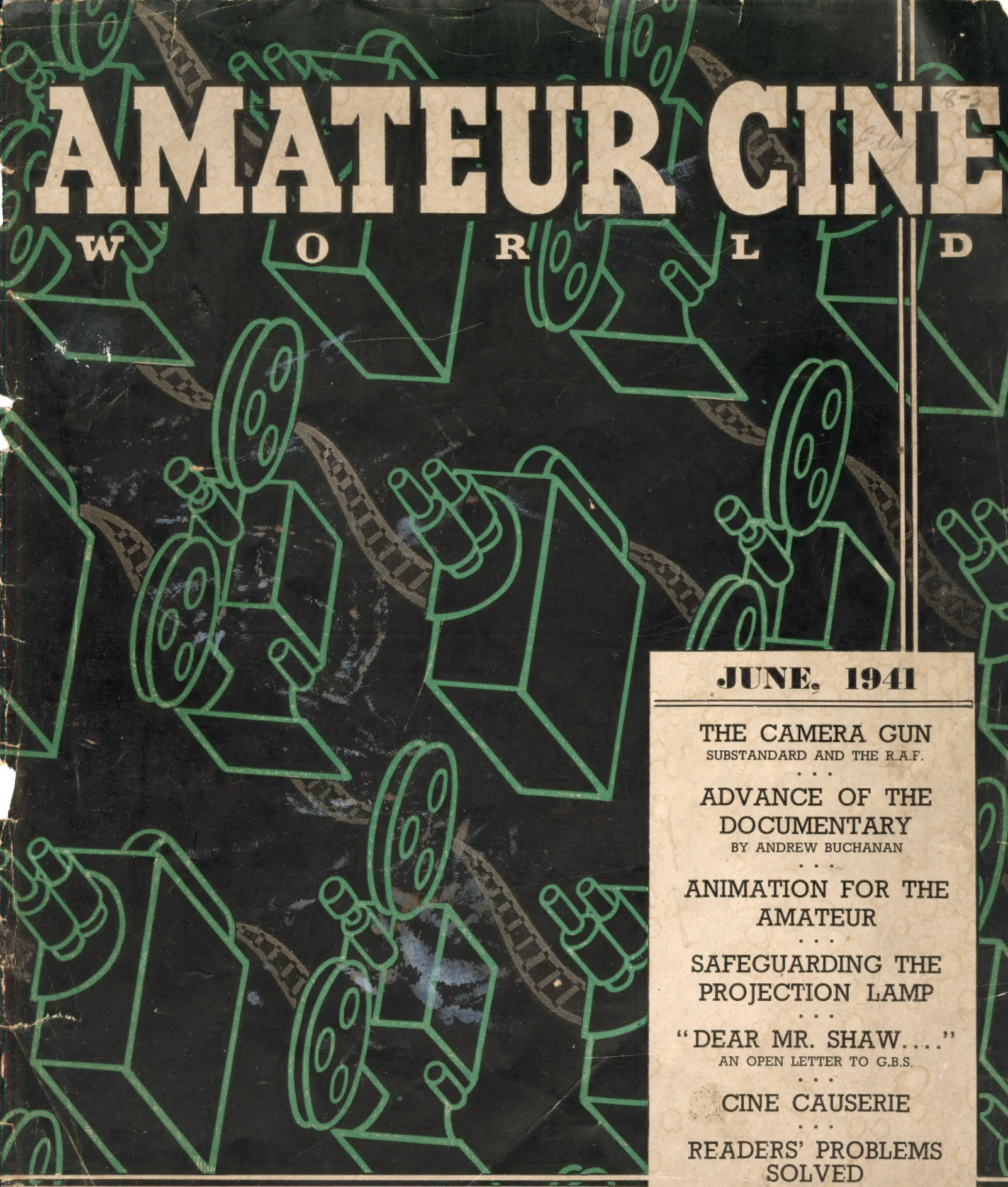
AMATEUR CINE WORLD



JUNE, 1941

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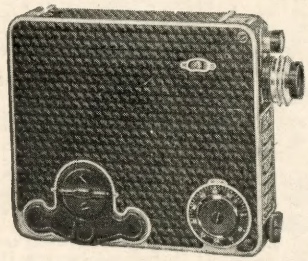

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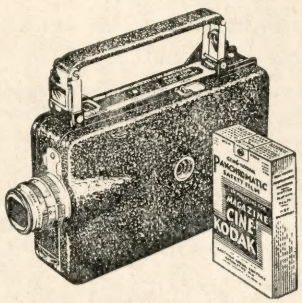

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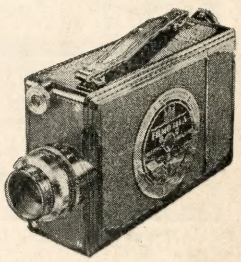

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THE ONLY JOURNAL SOLELY DEVOTED TO AMATEUR CINEMATOGRAPHY

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(Published May 17th)

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Principal Contents

SUBSTANDARD AND THE R.A.F. : THE CAMERA GUN 52

ANIMATION FOR AMATEURS : I. MAKING A START. By Denys Davis 54

DEAR MR. SHAW . . . By Ernest Lindgren 56

DO IT YOURSELF : SAFEGUARDING THE PROJECTOR LAMP. By G. A. Gauld, B.Sc. 58

REGIONAL LIBRARIES 59

THE NEW ORDER : 3. ADVANCE OF THE DOCUMENTARY. By Andrew Buchanan 60

CINE CAUSERIE. By "Cinnamon" 63

IT HAPPENED TO ME : SCARED OF THE MICROPHONE ... 64

SECRETS OF THE STUDIO ... 65

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ... 66

ROUND THE SOCIETIES ... 68

YOUR PROBLEMS SOLVED ... 69

Every effort is being made to secure that your copy of "Amateur Cine World" reaches you on time each month, but dislocation of transport due to air-raids is likely to cause occasional delays.

Should it arrive late, we would ask you to assist the newsagent by accepting your copy as usual. The Paper Control Order prevents him from returning unsold newspapers and periodicals and if a customer refuses to take his copy, the newsagent must bear the cost himself. Present conditions make the newsagent's work very difficult ; he will appreciate your help and so shall we.

Gordon S. Malthouse
Editor

Cine Equipment and the War Damage Act

CINE apparatus has never been cheap—inexpensive, perhaps, if you take the long view—but certainly not cheap. Necessarily prices are rising now (as investigation of the secondhand market quickly shows) and will probably continue to rise. One's projector, camera and accessories, therefore, represent a considerable monetary value. What if they are lost through enemy action ? Can compensation be claimed ?

A reader—one of many correspondents on this subject—wishes to know if these things are protected under the War Damage Act or whether they are classed as non-essential to the home. Several enquirers, indeed, seem to be confused about non-essential goods and insurance schemes. No distinction is, in fact, made about the type of personal chattels owned, except that *objets d'art*, jewellery, rare books, furs and a few articles of that kind (the list does not include cine apparatus) can only be covered up to a total of £100 or 20% of the total amount of the policy, whichever is the greater.

Under the Private Chattels Scheme of the War Damage Act 1941, free insurance for every adult on his personal goods is afforded up to £50, or, in the case of a "householder," up to £200 (if married, up to £300 with £25 in addition for each child under 16). "Householder" may mean individual (or joint) owner or tenant, as also a person renting an unfurnished room. Not more than £25 will be paid on any one article, and claims will not be paid until after the war, except in cases where the total amount is not more than £25, or where undue real hardship would be caused by the delay in settling claims. Interest at 2½% per annum will, however, be paid on the amount.

Now it may well be that owners of expensive cine equipment find that the free insurance does not cover it as well as their other personal chattels. In this case further insurance can be had at the rate of £1%, up to £2,000. For higher amounts the rates are proportionately increased. These policies are taken out with the fire insurance companies who act as agents for the Board of Trade, but only one policy at any one time is allowed on any one person's goods.

No one article (cars and motor cycles excluded) can be insured for more than £50 or 5% of the total sum insured, whichever is the greater, the value at which the article is assessed being the replacement cost at current prices, less the amount deducted for depreciation.

Should the apparatus suffer war damage, claims, in connection with the free insurance, should be made to the local Valuation Office, Department of Inland Revenue (the address can be had from any post office). Claims in connection with the policies for higher amounts should be made to the insurance companies.

The scheme is retrospective, and payments on damage incurred before the Act became operative will be made on the same basis, subject in the case of the higher claims to the deduction of the necessary insurance premiums.

One important point is that invoices and other evidence of the value of the apparatus should be kept for use when the claim is assessed by the district valuer.

When the war started there were many who thought that, the exclusion of foreign cine apparatus would give a great and much needed impetus to the home industry, for they argued that, in the last war, this country smashed the German domination in certain sections of the still photographic industry ; when supplies were cut off we started to manufacture our own—and made a better job of it.

It is idle to expect, however, that while the war lasts the British manufacturer will be able to take any steps at all to recreate the home market, for either he is engaged on manufacturing for export, or else his factory is devoted to supplying Government needs.

There is, however, one vital cine accessory that is being neither manufactured nor imported in sufficient quantities to meet a real need. Here is a case in which we cannot wait until after the war ; and we say this in no selfish spirit of self-interest. But this is a matter which we must leave for discussion until next month.

"AMATEUR CINE WORLD" TO BECOME POCKET-SIZE

BEGINNING with next month's issue, "Amateur Cine World" will come to you in a new format—a pocket-size monthly more convenient to handle and easier to read than the journal in its present form.

Although this radical change is primarily dictated by further restrictions imposed by the Paper Control (and as such will, we are sure, be greeted by our readers with the same cheerful acceptance as we ourselves have received the Order, since it has been made to release more shipping space for munitions of war) the change has also been decided on in order to effect an improvement in the magazine. For many months now we have used a smaller type than that used in pre-war issues. It was chosen for its legibility after many experiments, but even so, we are well aware that large pages of comparatively small, closely packed type become tiring to the eye after a time.

With a smaller page this is not the case ; the same type becomes much more legible, and the page itself is more agreeable to look at. Your new "Amateur Cine World," therefore, will not be just a junior edition of its old self, but an "Amateur Cine World" in a more pleasing style and retaining all its regular features and services. Necessarily there will be a little less space available than formerly, but the economies we have been able to effect in make-up will, we think, offset this very considerably ; further, in order to retain all those features which have made the magazine so popular and have enabled it to live through the present crisis, we are rationing advertisement space.

And, although so many journals have been compelled to increase their price, "Amateur Cine World" will still cost only sixpence monthly. You must, of course, order your copy, for we are not allowed to print more copies than we have orders for.

Substandard and the R.A.F.:

The knights of the air use 16mm. to devastating effect. The 16mm. camera gun, which takes records of aerial combats, has its optical axis exactly parallel with that of the gun sights and makes its exposures immediately the trigger is pulled. This account of the development and operation of the instrument is written by the chief inspector at the factory producing them.

Not a shot that you can take in war-time, but by splitting it into two you can get the same effect. First one would have a shot of people looking into the sky, and then follow it with a quick shot of a model plane.

SUBSTANDARD cinematography is contributing no small part to the winning of the war in the air, and it was with a peculiar sense of appropriateness that we who attended the Annual General Meeting of the Kinematograph Section of the Royal Photographic Society recently listened to an absorbing paper on the subject by Mr. C. J. Duncan, who is intimately connected with the present application of the instruments which have been developed since 1920.

Mr. Duncan, who illustrated his talk with a series of lantern slides depicting the various types of cameras used from time to time, gave a resume of the steps in the evolution of the process of recording photographically the work of air gunners, and outlined the methods which had been adopted at various stages to secure the results required.

Fixed and Free Guns

The use of the camera gun is to enable the appropriate members of the ground staff to evaluate with the least possible delay and the highest degree of accuracy the standard of excellence of gunnery in the air, whether the gun be of the 'fixed' or 'free' type. The fixed gun is one that is rigidly mounted in relation to the aircraft in which it is carried so that the pilot aims the whole aircraft at his opponent. The free gun is carried on a turret or swivel mounting which enables it to be aimed independently of the movement of the aircraft.

If a camera is added to or substituted for the normal gun, with its optical axis exactly parallel with that of the gun sights, and is so designed that an exposure or a series of exposures is made at the moment of pulling the trigger, it will record with a considerable degree of accuracy the position of the opponent aircraft in relation to the gunsights and will thus indicate whether the shoot has been successful or not.

The earliest camera-guns were of the 'still' or single exposure type, using roll-film which gave negatives about $2\frac{1}{4}''$ square. To assist in assessing the value of the shots other details were recorded at the moment of exposure. In one case, for example, a ruled glass screen caused a series of concentric circular lines to be superimposed upon the record obtained, the centre corresponding with the point aimed at at a given distance from the gun or camera, and at the same time permitting of correct allowances to be made for parallax at nearer and farther distances.

In the earlier forms of camera a watch, separately contained in a small chamber in the camera body and momentarily illuminated by a bulb within the chamber, impressed an image of itself on one corner of the record. A later development of this idea caused two images of the watch to be recorded, one when the gun trigger was first depressed and one when it was released. The effect on the negative was of a single watch face with two large second hands which gave the times of the commencement and finish of the gun burst and, of course, its duration in time. A single negative was secured for each gun burst, and cocking the gun automatically wound on the film to make it available for the next exposure. The whole instrument was so designed that its operation was identical with that of the actual gun which it represented.

It was realised in quite early days that the single exposure type of camera-gun had distinct limitations. For example, a gun burst, however short, lasts an appreciable number of seconds, whereas the single exposure can only be made at one moment during the burst. That moment may not coincide with that at which the successful shots are made. Again, the single exposure cannot indicate the movement of the opponent aircraft in relation to its attacker. This point will be understood by readers who have seen, for example, cine pictures of sailing yachts secured from the deck of a power-driven craft which was overhauling them. On the screen we have the somewhat puzzling effect of a properly rigged sailing boat apparently moving backwards. In the recording of aerial combat it is this relative movement which is all important, and the relationships may be modified in any apparent direction. For this reason it was found that pilots or gunners who secured a high proportion of successful negatives did not always repeat that success with an actual gun and an actual opponent or target.

THE YEAR'S BEST CAMERAMEN

Did you know that the 'Oscar' Award for the best acting performance of the year has its counterpart among cameramen? George S. Barnes, A.S.C., was recently acclaimed the foremost director of photography in 1940 for his work on "Rebecca." Georges ("Thief of Bagdad") Perinal was voted the foremost colour photographer. Voting on these awards is confined to members of the camera profession.

Recording Time of Gun Burst

Prior to 1931 some experiments were made with the G.10 cine camera gun produced by the Williamson Manufacturing Company. This, which was in outward appearance closely similar to the Vickers machine gun, used 35 mm. film, was electrically operated, included the watch unit feature mentioned above and a veeder counter. The watch was recorded after the last frame of the film strip corresponding to the gun burst. The experiments in this direction were finally shelved because of the comparatively great weight of the apparatus and the problems of processing long lengths of 35 mm. cine film.

In 1931 experiments with the 'still' type of camera were carried further with the Williamson G.22 and G.28, and in 1932 interest was again revived in the use of cine film because of the increasing popularity and success of 16 mm. cine film in the hands of the amateur user. The use of substandard cine film received complete official approval in 1934. The 1934/5 model, known as the G.37 and G.38 (the two types being for fixed and free mounting respectively) was built around the well-known Simplex Pochette camera, although the basic instrument underwent some modifications before being married to its auxiliary mechanism. It will be remembered that the Pochette was a clockwork instrument with magazine loading, the motor capacity being 25 feet and the full load, 50 feet.

Further Improvements

For aerial camera-gun work a sector shutter was added, a graticule was fitted in the gate to enable the shots to be more readily assessed from the markings thus superimposed on the exposures, an electrically operated remote-controlled release was included, and a footage indicator was added to the streamlined housing which enclosed the whole instrument. The camera operated at 16-20 f.p.s. A projector was also developed for use with this camera, and gave slow or single frame projection up to a standard size of $8\frac{1}{2}''$ x $6\frac{1}{2}''$. The results were assessed by examining single frames in succession, and not by normal 16-a-second projection. Frame processing was adopted as standard.

The CAMERA GUN

and How It Works

The G.37/38 was regarded only as an interim design, and 1935/6 saw the introduction of the G.42 and G.43, produced by Williamson. This was an electrically operated camera, magazine loading, with both magazine and the camera body of moulded bakelite. The bakelite was later abandoned in favour of metal when higher speeds of aircraft movement rendered this necessary. Current was supplied from the aircraft's batteries through a cable and a 7-pin plug at the rear end of the camera body, whence it was led to the motor, and to body and lens heaters. The former cut in when temperature dropped to 50 degrees F., and the latter was always in operation once the camera had been set in position and plugged into the current supply. The watch feature was still retained, and recorded at the end of the burst. The graticule was also retained. A mechanically operated footage meter was incorporated.

New Developments in Design

Certain weaknesses of design became apparent in an otherwise excellent instrument. For example, some trouble was experienced from the graticule which caused stress marks due to the collection of emulsion dust in its lines ; the dust built up into little mounds and then abraded the film. The graticule was abandoned, and the camera mask size reduced so that assessment could be made by relating the image of the target to the edges of the picture area. The footage meter operated whether there was film in the camera or not. In later models the passage of the film operated the footage meter.

The watch feature was abandoned, but a particularly brilliant piece of design, which had provided for the recording of its image on an extra frame after the termination of the normal chain of exposures in the burst, was now used to provide a single blank frame between bursts. That greatly facilitated segregation of the various bursts when examining the film. The above improvements and others were incorporated in the G.42B. which was introduced in 1939. In recent times Williamsons have evolved and produced the G.45 which has even greater points of superiority but which cannot be mentioned in detail as the instrument is still on the secret list.

The G.42, G.43, and G.42B. all had maltese cross intermittent movements and were designed to be used merely as sequence cameras. That is to say, they were regarded as a means of obtaining a series of 'single' individual exposures in rapid succession, at a frequency corresponding roughly with the frequency of bullet emission from the guns. It was intended that these results should be examined and assessed one by one, and for this purpose the maltese cross movement served admirably. Although the cameras were not intended to provide records for normal speed cine projection it was inevitable that this form of examination should be adopted sooner or later, and the projected pictures (as might be expected) were found to exhibit considerable vertical flutter. Nevertheless, this camera has been the means of securing some most memorable records of actual aerial battles at Dunkirk and other places during what is perhaps the most critical phase in British history, and the audience were privileged to see some of these. Pictures from the G.45 are rock steady, and compare favourably in this respect with the best commercial substandard cine cameras.

Film Stock

As may be imagined, the type of film stock to be used was the subject of considerable research, and the material finally decided upon was a medium speed orthochromatic film of somewhat high contrast characteristics. This is developed as a negative and is not normally printed from, the development being conducted by inspection. Pictorial quality is secondary here, the paramount requirement being an adequate contrast which will permit the silhouette of the opponent craft and other relevant details to be examined and assessed with the utmost possible clarity and accuracy.

The camera-gun idea started in the minds of its sponsors as a method of training. The trainee who fires at a towed target may use a real gun and real bullets, but his target is comparatively static. Two trainee pilots or gunners equipped with camera-guns may go up in opposing craft and indulge in the nearest possible thing to an actual combat, using all the manoeuvres and methods which they have been taught, and may later examine at leisure the records of what their gunnery would have given them had their panniers contained live rounds instead of film. The results thus obtained can be used to demonstrate to other trainees.

Thrills of Aerial Combat

Most inspiring use of all is in actual aerial combat. When one first sees these relentless records they are a little disappointing, but after a few feet one thrills to the terrific speed of modern aerial warfare, with the rapier-like darting in of tracer bullet slashes, the unemotional confirmation of the unerring bravery with which our airman plough straight into the centre of a swarm of enemy machines. In shot after shot we see the tell-tale burst of flame, or plume of smoke, or flying of pieces which are the beginning of the end of an enemy aircraft.

And one cannot but feel some sense of satisfaction in the knowledge that, by following the hobby of substandard cinematography from its earliest days and thus helping to convince the authorities that it was a practical thing, we amateur cinematographers have done a little towards the training and efficiency of that gay band of brothers, the fighter pilots of the R.A.F. Because it must never be forgotten that, although we and they owe a great deal to their courage and the excellence of their machines, it is the superlative character of the training and instruction which they have received which has permitted them to make full use of the two other advantages.

An eloquent shot that makes its effect with the barest essentials. Besides the value of its plainly expressed motive the flag gives interest to a featureless expanse of sky.

FOR THE SERVICES

The following will welcome members of the Services to their homes for a chat on cine topics, film shows, experimental filming, etc.

BLYTH, NORTHUMBERLAND. A. Graham, 500, Plessey Road, Newsham.

CAMBRIDGE. E. F. Watson, 100, Stretton Avenue.

COVENTRY. E. Brook Fowler, 97, Dillotford Avenue, Cheylesmore.

HYDE. Hyde C.S. Headquarters : Union Street School. Meetings every other Saturday afternoon. Hon. Sec. : E. A. Schoolden, "Edenhurst," 200, Dowson Road.

NEWPORT. Newport & District A.F.S. Every Tuesday evening at Albany Chambers, Skinner Street. Hon. Sec. : R. G. Butterworth, 156, Caerlon Road.

OLDHAM. A. Gaukrodger, 6, Thurland Road, Cranbrook Street, Lees Road.

OSWESTRY. Oswestry C.S. Hon. Assist. Sec. : Miss R. D. Brindley, 1, Stanley Place, Salop Road. The society will be glad to give programmes in their theatre upon receiving an indication that there are even a few enthusiasts who would enjoy them ; while Miss Brindley can give any evening except Friday.

PUTNEY. United Film Productions. (Hon. Sec. : J. Searle-Shirley, 25, Cromford Road, East Putney, S.W.18). French and Dutch amateurs particularly welcomed. Phone Putney 7783 or Putney 5985 (asking for Mr. Brandt).

SHEFFIELD, 6. H. Hill, 6, Alfred Road.

STOCKPORT. E. M. Greenwood, "Marrwood," Sundial Road. Members of Free French Forces particularly welcomed.

WATFORD. F. G. Benson, 88, Greenfield Avenue, Carpenders Park.

The Editor would be glad to hear from other readers prepared to offer similar hospitality.

ANIMATION FOR

1. MAKING A START

The animation studio fully described in this article. This converted studio was made from an old cinema by members of Luxor Films.

AT the outbreak of the war, cine societies closed down overnight and planned film production became an echo of the past for, generally speaking, it was impossible to marshal casts and technicians to produce the films. Outdoor filming, too, was greatly restricted. This set the scene for my introduction into the art of film animation, so that my colleagues and I, by producing films on this smaller and more practical basis, are now experiencing the excitement of the studio, and, at the same time, are gradually gaining technical proficency that will be of the greatest use to us in our hobby in the happier days that are to come.

Great Care Essential

We searched for weeks to find text-books that would simplify our animation problems but, as this quest was fruitless, I am writing this series so that the reader may examine the possibilities of this fascinating branch of cinematography and so decide whether or not this art interests him. In animation only painstaking work will result in a worth-while strip of film while, in everyday filming, rough and ready methods will often produce passable results. At the same time, it must be stated that animation is often boring, wearisome and devoid of interest.

To gain experience, we approached many advertising agencies in order to view the professional releases of puppet films in this country—for the majority are produced by publicity concerns. George Pal, one of the leading animators, has directed some very imaginative sequences interposed between the publicity but now, as he has taken up a contract with an American studio, he may be able to turn out even finer films unhampered by commercial requirements.

Occasionally he attempts to reproduce everyday scenes that, in our opinion, could best be depicted by living persons in the normal manner, for it is here that the inherent slight 'jerkiness' destroys the illusion. In the realm of fantasy, however, this element may be well employed, and, indeed, gives an incomparable effect that can be skilfully woven into one's films. Imagine, for instance, a toy-box that opens to reveal scenes from "The Wizard of Oz" performed by the toys themselves, or, again, a 'thin red line' of musketed soldiers who bravely march against a foe far away across the hearth rug.

Throughout this series I intend to quote the 16mm. Kodachrome production, "Strange Tactics," as a working example to illustrate the technical details. I hesitated before I wrote the title of this film, now being produced by my society, lest I might create the impression that animation is essentially a club project, but indeed only four members are really actively engaged upon the production. This film, bearing out the old tag about the cooks and the broth, proves that this type of work is best undertaken by a few persons only. In fact, three enthusiastic amateurs, with practical experience of camera work and lighting, could tackle a 400ft. colour film and also produce the simple equipment required.

There is a lock on the door of our animation studio, for a clumsy hand can soon ruin a sequence which, after many evenings' work, may be only half completed. A converted projection theatre, recently replaced by larger and more modern premises, has been utilised for animation purposes, and here good use has been made of the rising floor by placing the animating table on the lower level so that it may be overlooked by the director. It is essential, of course, to set a room apart for the animation, since the equipment required is not portable.

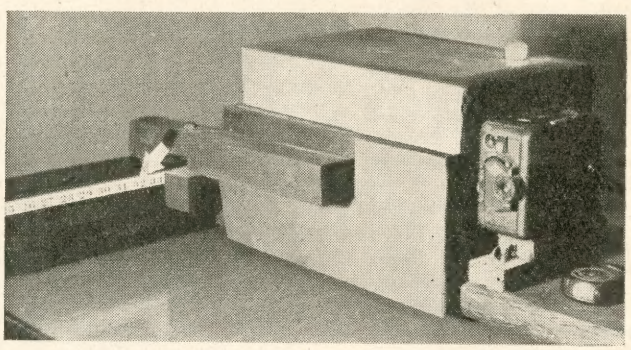
To ensure *absolute* rigidity, the animation table is screwed to the floor. In our case, an indoor tennis table was used, with extra bracing along its four sides. This bracing is 2" x 2" timber secured by iron brackets at the floor and beneath the table top at 2ft. intervals along the perimeter. Two sturdy beams, each 3" x 4", are mounted along the longer edges of the table to carry the special camera truck, mention of which will be made later.

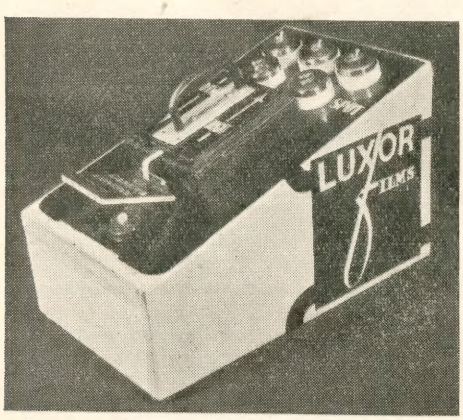
Lighting

As may be seen from the illustrations, the studio lighting is suspended from the ceiling, thus leaving the floor-space clear ; this greatly facilitates the work of the animators. There is, also, another reason for so fixing these lights. For animation purposes, it is essential that each frame of film should receive uniform exposure, so it is obvious that any movement of the lights between exposures would produce impossible results. Both the four floods and the two spots are commercial products, though home-made equipment would serve equally well. The lights can, of course, be raised or lowered and swivelled in any direction.

The lights are wired in the series-parallel system, for it would be obviously impracticable to switch six Photofloods on and off again several hundred times in a single evening. By this system the lighting burns at low power (series) throughout the entire evening and is only switched over to full brilliance (parallel) immediately prior to the exposure of each single frame of film ; this system has the added advantage of considerably prolonging the 'filming' life of each individual Photo flood.

Front view of camera and box containing the electric drive and clutch release. The light at the top indicates that the motor is revolving. The metal arrow points to one of two measures that are affixed to either side of the table. Practical details of the conversion of the camera used have already been published in "A.C.W."





Switch-board used on console. The main lighting switch is in the 'bright' position. Note the press button for the camera control. When the main switch is pulled back, the flap closes down.

THE AMATEUR

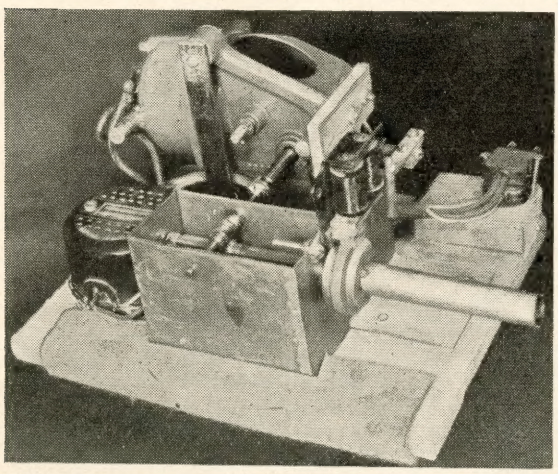
If opportunities for outdoor filming are restricted, why not try animation? Animation does not only imply cartoon work. If you have no skill at drawing, the manipulation of puppets may provide the outlet you seek for indoor activities. And it has the advantage that hours of enjoyment may be obtained for the expenditure of very little footage.

By DENYS DAVIS

The animator moves one of the puppets between the filming of separate frames of the film.

The director's console, which is just an ordinary desk with a switchboard at one side and a well-lighted script-board at the other, is placed so that he may overlook the whole animating table—preferably from the camera view-point. From here he may control the lighting and the electrically operated camera by means of the switchboard which distributes the power from one main cable wired into the desk.

The lighting 'change-over' switch is, in reality, four ordinary 'double-throw' tumbler switches, mounted in two rows, one above the other. A steel plate, which has four holes drilled in it, operates the four toggles simultaneously as it slides between two brass grooves.



Camera drive for single picture work. The driving shaft extends from the bottom right hand side of the picture. Note the magnetic coils and transformer for their current supply.

The steel plate has a large handle mounted on it for easy operation. Immediately above this switch may be seen two tumbler switches which cut out the floods and spots so that their effect may be gauged independently.

It is necessary to set apart a camera for animation—one adapted to take the special motor drive (in our studio the f/3.5 Agfa 16mm. cassette loading model has been slightly converted) The additional cost of this camera need not be a deterrent, however, as the simplest model obtainable will suffice. The lens, for example, need only be of the 'fixed-focus' type, and a fast lens is not required. Even an old hand-cranked camera may be used with perfect results, but cassette loading, although by no means essential, is a definite advantage. If one's particular requirements are stated, a dealer can usually supply such a camera for a few shillings ; or this equipment may often be found in out of the way 'odds and ends' shops.

I do not propose to give practical details of the camera alteration or of the special motor drive and clutches as they have already been described in previous issues of *A.C.W.* The actual conversion of the camera used by us was described in an illustrated article in the November, 1940, issue. The electrical drive is an adaptation of the mechanism described in the series by Stanley W. Bowler, F.R.P.S., on constructing a cartoon bench (October and November 1939 issues). The mechanism used in our studio is a simple adaptation of the single-picture-trip-gear-apparatus described in these articles.

The Mechanism

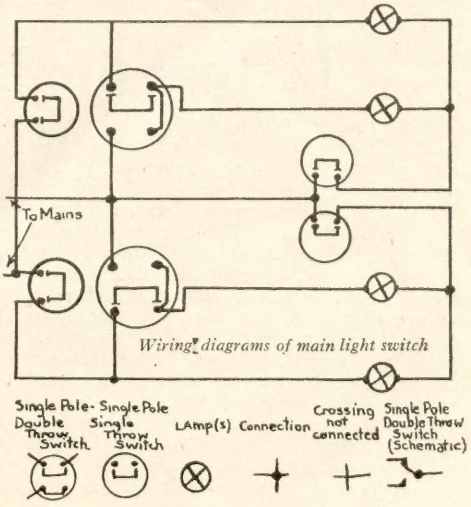
For the benefit of readers who do not wish to turn back to them, a brief description of our mechanism is given. An electric motor revolves constantly throughout the period of filming. A single picture shaft projects from the camera and is connected to the motor by means of a clutch operated by an electro-magnetic trip-gear. The clutch is 'out of gear' until a bell push (on the console) is pressed once, when the clutch engages and exposes one single frame of film. The mechanism automatically completes a cycle and then resets itself while the motor continues to revolve.

Perhaps you will ask why we do not use the single picture device that may be found on many cameras. The reason is that this system will not give *absolutely* uniform exposure to each single frame of film, flicker (and certain other faults) resulting. In passing, it may be noted that each frame of film receives 2.75 secs. exposure, but further mention of this will be made in the next article.

Referring back to the illustration of the switchboard, an open flap below the lighting switch may be seen. Under this is a small recess in which the camera control push button is placed. The photograph shows the lighting switch in the 'bright' position, but when the switch is pulled back to the 'dim' position, that flap closes down so that the camera cannot be operated—a simple enough device but it has prevented many a careless mistake from ruining a sequence.

A simple camera truck is next fitted. Bearing in mind that an actual 'slow track forward' may last some two hundred frames—and consequently take several hours to film—it is clear that this tracking device must necessarily 'run' smoothly. All the bearing surfaces, therefore, are formed of plywood and are so arranged that any slight warping or other trouble may be immediately corrected by the turn of a nut.

A thick plank, slightly shorter than the distance between the two beams, previously mentioned, is supported so that it passes slightly above the top surface of the table. The camera with its motor mechanism is permanently mounted upon this plank so that the lens passes across the exact centre of the table, and the side of the camera is set at 90° to the front edge of the plank. An arrow head has been affixed to both 'carriages' so that it points to a tape-measure fastened to either beam, measuring from the very back of the table towards the set. Thus, if the arrows are set for, say, 46″ on either side of the table, one is sure that the camera is 'dead-on' to the background. Tracking is effected by moving the truck forward in a series of short steps between the exposure of single frames. A small wooden holder, for supplementary lenses, is also mounted upon the truck below the camera lens. The set end of the table is covered with a ½″ layer of cork in which a large turntable, mounted on plywood, is cut.



Wiring diagrams of main light switch

Dear Mr. Shaw . . .

¶ *For his review of current professional releases our contributor this month selects "Major Barbara" and addresses an open letter to Bernard Shaw on its defects and merits. Mr. Lindgren advocates the documentary approach as a counterblast to the domination of the theatre over the stage and makes a plea for reality, which is the essence of film, in place of the stage back-cloth.*

This scene from "Major Barbara," released this month, shows the first meeting of Adolphus Cusins (Rex Harrison) and Major Barbara (Wendy Hiller). Wendy Hiller will be remembered for her excellent performance as Eliza Doolittle in Shaw's "Pygmalion."

Your new film, *Major Barbara*, generally released to the cinemas this month, is a conspicuous example of what I should describe as a thoroughly interesting and entertaining film which is nevertheless marred, as a film, by major technical weaknesses. There is no doubt of its entertainment value. I have seen it twice and on each occasion an almost continuous ripple of chuckling ran through the audience when they were not laughing outright. I very much hope, therefore, that every reader of this journal will manage to see it.

The press critics have given it a most cordial reception. But if any one should infer from reading their reviews that *Major Barbara* is a masterpiece of film craftsmanship, he would be sadly misled. The film, in fact, raises again that old, old question : Can a good film be made from a stage-play, however good ? Discussion of this question has almost worn itself threadbare, but I regard *Major Barbara* as a special case of sufficient importance to justify returning to it once more. A mediocre melodrama on some fantastic romantic convention can be altered radically without loss, even perhaps with gain. In the new film version of *The Trial of Mary Dugan*, for example, which I have just seen, the trial which occupies the whole of the original play does not begin until fully halfway through the film.

But to alter your own work radically would be to destroy it ; it is a case of genuine adaptation or nothing. Moreover, I know that you yourself hold strongly-expressed views on this question of adaptation and on the relationship of stage and screen. After the film production of *Pygmalion* you answered a series of questions put to you by *The Cine-Technician* and published in the September-October 1939 issue of that paper. Among them were the following :

Q. "Did Pygmalion lose any of its force in being transferred to the screen ?"
A. "No."
Q. "Are you likely to write directly for the screen ? If not, why not ?"
A. "My stuff is as good on the screen as on the stage."
Q. "What is your opinion of screenwriting as a profession ? Is the scenario-writer necessary ?"
A. "That depends on how much the author leaves undone. The author, if a playwright, should do everything except the shooting-script."

Everything which is said here about *Pygmalion* may be applied equally, I take it, to *Major Barbara*. In the credit titles you yourself accept responsibility for the scenario and it must be assumed that the film is, as a whole, one with which you are well satisfied. Let me, therefore, explain how and where those who, like myself, are accustomed to think in terms of film technique rather than stage technique, find the film disappointing.

When the first act of your stage play opens in Lady Britomart's drawing room, two of the principal characters, Major Barbara and Adolphus Cusins, have already met and are engaged. In the film you decide to begin the story further back, and to show their first meeting at a Salvation Army open-air service. To Adolphus, Barbara is merely a very attractive Army lass, probably as poor as her colleagues ; he has no idea that she is the daughter of Andrew Undershaft, millionaire armament manufacturer, and of Lady Britomart. He is therefore aggravatingly patronising.

Expectation Unfulfilled

When Barbara decides to take him home to introduce him to her family, she murmurs with a roguish twinkle : "God has some surprises coming to you, my friend." They get on a bus and the shot mixes through to a close-up of a hand wandering hesitantly between a row of door-bells, one marked "Visitors," and another "Servants." Adolphus has arrived on the doorstep, and Barbara's last ominous reply before they go in is : "You'll find my mother much more terrifying."

Naturally the effect of all this is to lead the audience to expect that what they are now going to see is the first meeting between Lady Britomart and Adolphus, which might surely have been one of the comic high-spots of the film. But nothing of the sort. What they see instead is a single shot of Adolphus in Salvation Army uniform having difficulties with the big drum. This dissolves to a shot of Adolphus and Barbara, now clearly friends of some long standing, getting on the bus again in the pouring rain to return to Barbara's home, with everything set for the opening of what is, in effect, the first act of the stage play.

The resulting sense of anti-climax is so strong that it brings a perceptible shock even to those who are so uncritically minded as to be incapable of analysing the cause. I must confess I find it difficult to understand why you decided to avoid the obligation of writing-in that second additional scene which the

Testing for Light Output

The British Standards Institution has recently issued a standard light output test for substandard cine projectors. The specification (price 2/3, post paid, from the B.S.I., 28, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1) is primarily intended for the assistance of those buying projectors, enabling them to compare the light output of different types and also keep a check on any reduction in output after a period of use. The apparatus required consists of a 100-watt Class A.1 projector lamp calibrated for directional candle power to commercial accuracy, and marked to indicate the direction in which it was calibrated, a good candle meter, suitable voltage controlling apparatus, substandard voltmeter and, of course, a screen.

The method tests for light output only, no reference being made in the specification to picture steadiness and quality, freedom from flicker and the colour content of the light, for it is expected that when two or more projectors are available for comparison, these factors will be examined most conveniently by running the projectors side by side under similar operating conditions. Nor (because such tests are long and costly) is provision made for ascertaining lamp life, although increased output is obtained by employing lamps of shorter life. It is stated that "it will usually be found more convenient in practice to accept a statement of average lamp life supported by the projector maker's guarantee, and consider it in conjunction with the cost of lamp renewal."

writing-in of the first one so clearly imposed on you.

The limitations of the stage compel the dramatist to refer indirectly to scenes and events which in a film can be shown directly, and to condense sequences of events which in a film can be shown separately : adaptation is in a large measure, of course, the task of translating the indirect and the condensed into the direct and the sequential. But it is not enough merely to do sufficient to give some variety and for the rest cling over-tenaciously to the original.

If the film version of a play is to be entirely free from the rigid limitations of the stage original the adaptation must surely be carried out so thoroughly that the result is very much what a film writer might have achieved by treating the same subject directly without any reference to a stage original. If the film of *Major Barbara* had been the original work of a young screen-writer I do not believe that he would have left this anti-climactic gap.

A *Curious Sequence*

Although a considerable degree of filmic freedom has been introduced into the events covered by the long second act of the play by ringing the changes on interior and exterior, and by introducing such scenes as Bill Walker's meeting with Todger Fairmile, and the mass meeting at the Albert Hall, which are only referred to in the play, there is still one other scene which I would wish to have seen and that is Snobby Price's confessions to the crowd which wrung from them a collection of four shillings and tenpence, and which might have replaced to some extent Snobby's own forecast of his confessions at the beginning of the act.

The most curious part of the film, however, was that showing Andrew Undershaft's armaments factory near the end. This is the one part where an attempt has been made to get away from the influence of the theatre altogether. The factory is shown by an impressionist series of documentary shots of glowing ingots, blast furnaces, nitrate towers and the like sandwiched between a factory entrance and factory offices so palatial that they could have originated nowhere else but in the florid imaginations of the art directors.

Too Impressionistic

There are I think a number of reasons why these factory scenes fail so lamentably. First, they are entirely out of style with the film as a whole. Secondly they are so extremely impressionistic in character that they become that kind of hurried tourist's-eye view which is no view at all. The cut-in shots of the actors are strangely out of place and bring us back with a series of jerks to the theatrical which further mars what realism there might have been. The " machine music " of William Walton also served to emphasise the fanciful aspect and to diminish the realistic although exactly the opposite was no doubt the intention.

Adolphus and the Undershaft family are also shown round the workers' houses which are supposed to be models of what a well-ordered industrial community can provide. But never once do we go inside one of these houses. Apart from the chief characters of the film, the only human beings we see are as incidental as the trees and the chimney pots. Whoever devised this sequence has failed to appreciate one of the most elementary tenets of film making : namely, that the strength of the film lies in its ability to show the minute and the particular, to illustrate generalities by individual cases.

My criticism of this sequence leads me to what is, when all is said, my chief criticism of the whole film. The main problem of both film and play is the problem of poverty, poverty as the chief crime in society. On the stage, because you are working with actors and with painted scenery, you cannot show poverty. You can only refer to it in words : you can only use actors impersonating poor and uneducated men. But in a film you can actually show poverty in all its misery and ugliness.

Slum Dwellers as " Actors "

I wonder whether you have ever seen a short documentary film, which was made some years ago by Arthur Elton for the British Commercial Gas Association, called *Housing Problems* ? If not I would give much to enable you to see it. If you have, you will remember that it deals with the problem of slum clearance in Stepney. There is absolutely nothing faked about it. The camera and the microphone are taken into particular slums. We see the shored-up walls, the

American amateurs at work. The Triangle Cinema League of Chicago sends us this still of the rocket set for their production, " By Rocket to the Moon." The film has taken five years to make.

falling ceilings, the bugs under the wallpaper, the rat holes. The " actors " are the slum dwellers themselves, describing in their own rich idiom, in interviews which are spontaneous and unrehearsed, the horror of the conditions under which they live.

The producers of *Housing Problems* could work with actual slum dwellers because they were composing a document. For more ambitious productions after the style of *Major Barbara* ordinary untrained people would clearly be inadequate. The director is bound to work with trained actors. But certainly not actors trained in the traditions of our present-day theatre, as Bernard Miles, the stage and film actor, emphasises in "Documentary News Letter" for April, 1941:

" . . . Is it to be wondered at that the acting of about ninety-five per cent. of the English stage lacked all reality or contact with Life ? That it was largely a meaningless parade of technical tricks even more empty than the conventional sounding-brass technique of the old barnstormers ? I suggest that if the documentary directors had been able to take and train even a dozen carefully chosen youngsters along the path that they themselves were so ably treading, to function credibly in a world where glamour and a few other entirely stupid factors are not the be all and the end all here, the results would have been startling. Such a group of youngsters trained to get themselves dirty and to make of dirtiness a virtue, to stand at bench or sink with fitters and washer-women, to try the habitual and traditional actions of real workmen born and bred in ancient crafts, would have lighted such a candle in the entertainment industry as would not easily have been put out."

In the absence of such a school of actors, and with stage-trained actors as the only alternative, the documentary film movement in this country, still subservient to outworn principles of the Soviet silent cinema, still relying mainly on editing, has turned its back on the problem of dealing with human material.

The Film's Strength

In adapting for the cinema such a play as *Major Barbara*, which deals not with some idle romantic convention, but with the realities of the world in which we live, it is not enough simply to put in one or two extra scenes showing pieces of action which in the play are supposed to take place off-stage ; the film must also show directly, even actually if that is desirable, the very realities with which it is mainly concerned. If the subject is poverty, let us see poverty. You cannot take that poverty on to your stage. But we can go to it with our film cameras. That is the film's strength.

And if the background is going to be real, you cannot bring your stage actors into it, with their wigs and stage mannerisms. You must use actors whose training enables them to fit into that background. Such actors are possible. Marie Ault, who plays Rummy Mitchens in your film, is a living proof of it. She is the one actor in *Major Barbara* who might have appeared in *Housing Problems* and not seemed hopelessly out of place.

The Main Weakness

The principal weakness of *Major Barbara* as a film is that it fails to do all this. And if you had attempted to do it just how much of your original play would have been left ? You might as well have put it on one side and begun to write again from the beginning.

As long as the domination of theatre over film continues we shall be unable to create a really worthy school of British film craftsmanship. It is a mark of the generally poor quality of film-making in this country that your *Major Barbara*, deficient though it is as a *film*, should be hailed everywhere as a major event. Such a British school of cinema would surely become a vital and influential medium for your successors who, fertile with ideas no less stimulating and revolutionary, would use that medium most powerfully because they would be expressing themselves directly in it, a language in which they had been trained. Yours sincerely,

ERNEST LINDGREN.

PATHE REELS AND CONTAINERS

We regret a misprint in Messrs. Pathe Equipment's advertisement in last month's issue. The 9.5mm. 400ft. capacity containers cost 1/9 each, not 1/-. The container is tinplate sprayed. The 16mm. cans also cost 1/9 each.

"DO IT YOURSELF!"
practical ideas for the handyman

SAFEGUARDING THE PROJECTOR LAMP

Each month our contributor supplies a page of practical ideas: things to make and things to do. Suggestions for gadgets are welcomed.

By G. A. GAULD, B.Sc.

ALTHOUGH the time has arrived when the projector usually takes a back seat on the shelf while the camera takes the field, the projector season now extends to almost the whole of the year, so that if my readers are not already tired of lamps, resistances, transformers and so on, I would like to discuss one or two more points worthy of discussion, before we turn to other topics.

My own equipment started from very humble beginnings but in the course of time I succeeded in building a projector capable of giving a satisfactory performance in a fair-sized hall. It was with this machine that I first made the acquaintance of comparatively powerful projector lamps. To my dismay, I rapidly burnt out two of these lamps in quick succession, long before their normal span of life was completed.

What Was Wrong?

Not only was this disastrous to my pocket, but it also led me to have grave misgivings as to my capabilities as an amateur projectionist. I checked up on my transformer and lamp, had my ammeter tested, and conducted a considerable correspondence with the makers of the various parts. Everything seemed to be in order, yet something was obviously wrong.

Reference to a surge of current when a lamp is first switched on has often been made in the pages of this journal, and to understand why this surge occurs is the first step towards devising the remedy. As subsequent experience has proved to me that the professional machine is by no means free of the same defect, a word or two about the cause and its cure will not be out of place, particularly as projector lamps are more precious than ever at the present time.

Resistance and Temperature

Readers may remember that for the resistance a wire made of an alloy having a low temperature coefficient was chosen. Those of us who still have some recollection of "Mag. and Elec." in our school physics, will remember that there is a definite relationship between the resistance of a given wire and its temperature. This relationship varies with different metals, and is termed the "temperature coefficient." A wire having a low coefficient was chosen, because such a wire will maintain a more or less constant value of resistance over the range of temperature it is likely to experience. This, in turn, means that the current passed will be substantially the same whether the resistance be hot or cold.

In the case of the copper wire used in a transformer, or the tungsten wire used in a lamp filament, the choice of the metal to be used depends on so many other factors, as I have already shown in a previous article, that the question of the temperature coefficient hardly counts at all and its value may be relatively high. It is obvious that the lamp filament, in particular, experiences an enormous range of temperature, from the coolness of a room to an extreme white heat.

It will be evident, therefore, that at the instant the current is switched on, the resistance of the filament will be considerably less than it is a moment later, when it has become white hot and is emitting light. Although the filament heats up immediately, there must be an almost instantaneous surge of excess current the moment the switch is closed. The effect in the case of the transformer will be less but protracted ; the range of temperature is small, but the transformer will take a minute or two to warm up. Both factors, however, contribute to the initial surge of current which endangers the life of the lamp.

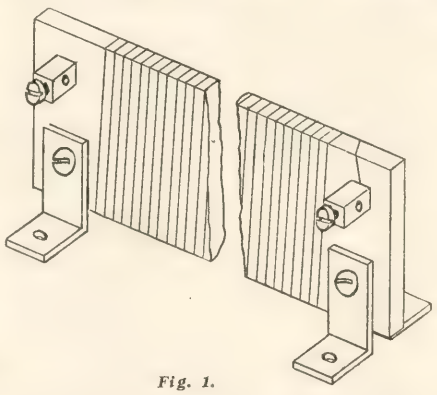


Fig. 1.

The obvious remedy is to find a means of warming up the lamp by the application of a reduced voltage. The initial surge will still take place, but the limiting voltage must be so arranged that the value of the surge current will not exceed the amperage taken by the lamp under normal operating conditions. The simplest way to deal with the matter is to incorporate an auxiliary resistance in the circuit, having a shorting switch to cut it out of action as soon as the lamp has warmed up.

Add Extra Coils

If a resistance of the type I described last month is being used, a few extra coils may be added for this purpose. The commercial article usually provides an excess of resistance over actual requirements, and may be utilised in a similar way. The current is first switched on with the full available resistance in circuit. A few moments later, the cursor may be moved up until the ammeter needle registers the full permissible current which may be taken by the lamp. This value, as I have stated before, is obtained from the formula :—

$$\text{Current (Amps.)} = \frac{\text{Lamp Wattage}}{\text{Lamp Voltage}}$$

In the case of a transformer, the initial current may be reduced by means of an auxiliary resistance or choke, operating in either the primary or secondary circuit. The resistance is the easier of the two to make and may consist, simply, of a length of resistance wire wound round a strip of asbestos-cement sheet, about two inches wide, as indicated in Fig. 1. Whether it is used in the primary side of the transformer, or the secondary side, is largely a matter of the particular wire available at the time.

To revert, once again to the particular case of a 250 watt lamp, rated at 110 volts, operating through a step-down transformer from 230 volt mains, if the wire available is round about 30 gauge, make up an auxiliary resistance of 10 ohms for use in the primary circuit. If the wire available is heavier, say about 20 gauge, a resistance of 5 ohms in the secondary will do equally well. A simple "on-off" switch, connected up as shown in Fig. 2, will serve to short-circuit the resistance as soon as the lamp has warmed up.

Under certain conditions, a tapped transformer may be used in a similar way. It may, for example, have tappings for 200/220, 220/240 and 240/260 volts. If the mains are rated at 230 volts, the transformer may first be switched in on the highest tapping, a change-over switch being used to transfer to the correct value after a few minutes.

One more useful function of these auxiliary resistances is that of reducing the degree of illumination. Under certain conditions, in a small room perhaps, where the picture must

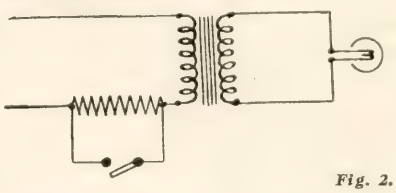


Fig. 2.

be smaller than usual and a lower degree of illumination is permissible, if not advantageous, the auxiliary resistance may be left in circuit. This treatment will actually increase the life of the lamp. In fact, as a general rule, it may be said that, in the interests of lamp economy, it should only be run to its limit when the screen size makes it absolutely necessary. It will pay to keep a little bit of power in hand whenever possible.

A PLEA FOR EFFICIENT PROJECTION

This will probably be the last article in this series on projection topics for some time and, for that reason, I want to make one more plea for efficient presentation by the amateur projectionist.

During the last six months or so, my work has taken me among Service camps and I have been both a passive and active member of the audience at a number of cinema shows given by amateurs and that hard working organisation, "ENSA." No doubt many readers

of this journal are engaged on similar good works and are meeting their own problems.

The army type of hut, eighty feet long by twenty feet wide, with its relatively low roof, in which most of these shows are given, falls far short of the ideal cinema building. Visibility is bad and the acoustics are often appalling.

First of all, do see that the projector is erected on a reasonably steady base—not just a couple of tables, stuck one on top of the other, liable to collapse at any moment, while the picture flaps up and down on the screen as if a gale had smitten the hut. Although contrary to the rules I have previously laid down for the home cinema, the only cure for bad visibility under these conditions is that of pitching the screen as high as possible. The people in the front rows will certainly get a crick in their necks, but the back seat members of the audience will at least see the top two thirds of the picture instead of the more usual half.

Killing Echoes

For the same reason, the picture should not be too large, and a special long focus lens may have to be purchased to arrange for this. And let the screen *be* a screen, not a piece of white sailcloth, tacked on to the end wall of the hut with a few drawing pins, with a dozen wrinkles to cut across the heroine's beautiful features.

The problem of acoustics is a most troublesome one, and little can be done save by trial and error. Echoes can sometimes be killed by draping a few army blankets over the rafters, usually at the back of the hut. If, as I have so often seen, the loud speaker is placed on a chair or stool immediately below the screen, the people in the front rows are deafened, while the audience completely blankets the sound from those at the back.

An experiment I tried, with considerable success in a typical hut, was to set the speaker near the roof, above the screen, as shown in Fig. 3. To prevent loss of sound and echoes among the rafters, a sound reflector made up from several large sheets of "plasterboard" was rigged up in the roof above the speaker. The best angle was found by direct experiment. It seems that the front and middle members of the audience get the reflected

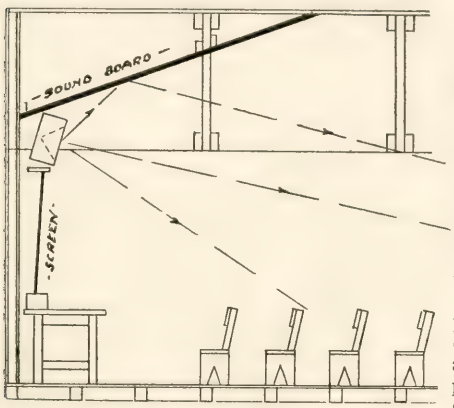


Fig. 3.

sound thrown back from the board, while those at the back get the sound direct from the speaker. At any rate, the idea was successful; it was suggested by the similar sort of gadget one sometimes sees in the older churches, over the pulpit, erected, no doubt,

(*Continued at foot of next column*)

REGIONAL LIBRARIES

A Suggestion for the Better Circulation of Amateur Educational Films.

THE amateur who urges the inclusion in the film libraries of famous films of the silent era and who asks for a representative selection of the best amateur films, cannot but experience a fellow feeling for the school-teacher who is confronted by similar problems and obstacles.

Some of these obstacles are discussed in the "Report of an Educational Film Campaign," conducted by the British Film Institute and published by that body at 1/-. It is, of course, realised that it would prove extremely difficult to implement now any of the suggestions made for resolving the difficulties; that must wait until after the war but, at any rate, it is as well to consider the matter now. And it may profit the amateur to do so, too, for if the problems are related, might not the suggested solutions be applicable in part to his own particular difficulties?

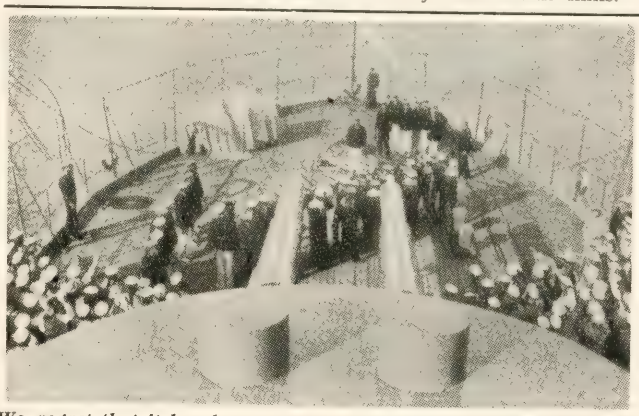
The main drawbacks to a wider use of films in schools are (a) the cost of the film hire is too high; (b) although long notice of requirements may have been given, it frequently happens—especially in the case of the Empire Film Library and other 'free' libraries—that a promised film is not available on the date when it is needed and an utterly useless substitute is sent; (c) there is a great disparity between the quality of sound and silent films. Although many teachers prefer the latter for classroom use, many of the films are comparatively old-fashioned in content and treatment; (d) the search for appropriate films takes far too much of the teachers' time; (e) there is an obvious lack of co-operation between teachers and producers.

It is pointed out that the scale of library film fees is entirely reasonable; indeed, the present rate is essential if the libraries are to recover even the running expenses of servicing and replacing films, without question of making a profit. Nevertheless, it is almost prohibitive to most schools.

The inability to get films on the date required is plain evidence that the stock of prints in the country is inadequate. If, as is hoped, there will in the near future be a considerable increase in the number of projectors in schools, then the position will be worsened unless active steps are taken to increase the number of prints available.

With regard to the poor quality of silent films, it is pointed out that, since professional experience and experiment have, for the most part, been concerned with sound films, even in the substandard sphere, there has been little effort to develop the technique of the silent film. "Indeed, the few educational pictures of this type made recently have been almost entirely the work of amateurs or semi-amateurs, and the only contributions of the commercial producers towards meeting the demands of the schools for silent films have been mute versions and re-edited silent editions of sound films. Both these

(*Continued on page 71*)



FAMOUS LIBRARY FILMS

Next Month's Commentary will deal with

"POTEMKIN"

This scene from this famous film shows sailors, huddled under a tarpaulin, awaiting execution. A still from the most discussed of any film sequence ever made, the massacre on the Odessa Steps, will be reproduced next month.

We regret that it has been necessary to hold over from this issue the very popular feature, "Famous Library Films." To do so is rather akin to taking off a highly successful play at the height of its run. But readers will realise that space problems are acute these days and we cannot find room for all the material we would like to publish. The series will, however, be resumed next month.

(*Continued from previous column*)

to ensure that our grandfathers would have no difficulty in hearing the sermon. (This of course, was long before the days of microphones and amplifiers).

When making your experiments in acoustics, do not forget that the audience has a considerable effect on sound values; there may be a great difference between the empty hut and the same hut full of people. This means that final adjustments may have to be carried out during the show. Once the conditions are right, full notes should be made of the arrangements. If you are taking a show "on the road" over a regular circuit, see that you have the particulars of the requirements of each of the huts you visit. There will always be plenty of help available, and your preparations can be completed before the show goes on.

Remember that the reputation of we amateurs is at stake, and that there is no reason why we should not do as well as the professionals. In fact, we should do better, for we are probably doing the job because we like it. For the professional, it is just the nightly round; and the constant repetition of a routine job is enough to take the edge off any enthusiasm he may originally have had.

ADVANCE *of the*

A BLUE-PRINT FOR

A scene from "The General Line," famous Russian picture that contributed towards the establishment of a new type of film: human documentaries that presented a dramatic story of a nation's culture.

By ANDREW

ABOUT twelve years ago I went to the Scala Theatre in London to see that vibrating Russian production, "Ten Days That Shook the World"; it was preceded by Grierson's "Drifters." Here, then, was a programme of unusual interest, for both films offered something new by presenting reality in highly dramatic form. I had not heard the word 'documentary' in relation to film, and so "Drifters" was uncategorised, save that it was a short film.

But in those days, there were hundreds of one and two reelers showing in cinemas, for double-features had not unrolled their vast lengths over the screen, thereby squeezing everything else out but the news reel. There were weekly outputs of American comedies, Travelogues and Movie Chats, and it was also the period when Felix the Cat was walking into every programme. Consequently, the appearance of such a short film as "Drifters" caused no surprise, but its method of presentation created a sensation, for it projected a form of film-making which, by the skilful manipulation of shots, particularly incidental and atmospheric shots, created high-powered drama out of an everyday happening.

The Russian feature following it was also of a documentary nature, indeed, all those silent Soviet films were distinctly so, for they were concerned solely with presenting the dramatic story of the nation's revolution, and the results of it upon agriculture and the community. If one can look steadily back, and entirely forget political angles, those Russian films remain the greatest object lesson film-makers can have. The productions were not concerned with studios, nor with players from theatres. They achieved what so many of us have advocated, but few have achieved, the capturing of the story of *life* itself, as only film can—that is, faithfully, yet, by expert camerawork and cutting, dramatising and magnifying it without falsification.

Start of a New Movement

"Drifters," like the Russian film, can be said to have started a movement, which, in turn, laid the foundations of a new technique. Prior to this, all films devoid of fictional plots, and concerned with actuality, were usually postcard albums and guide books on strips of celluloid. There were the beauties of England, and of Japan (in blossom time, of course) and of old Ireland, and of Niagara, and of Africa (Africa usually being filmed in pouring rain with cameras which trembled with an almost rhythmic perfection) but always, yes always, the "views" were shot as views—the most prominent characteristic being distance: falling water, dancing savages, waving blossom, or the calm cathedral, always being about two hundred yards away, seemingly separated from the camera by mist. Such films provided documentary evidence of the existence of such places, but there was no life, no movement, no feeling.

Then, thanks to the entry of genius, men like Grierson decided to achieve something which, to-day, seems dreadfully obvious, as do all great things when they have become familiar. These men decided to regard the camera as something far more than—well— a camera on a tripod which one set up, cranked, and then carried away over one's shoulder, like the man used to do on Margate sands. They became determined that a medium capable of capturing accurate pictures of reality should seek to approach heights of pictorial expression equal to the perfection achieved by the written word.

That involved, of course, showing those misty views in such a manner that they were thoroughly analysed, all details which composed them being presented with dramatic emphasis so that the audience would really smell the blossoms, feel the spray of falling water, draw back from the intensity of the dancing savages, and wander through the old cathedral, pausing to study its ageless beauty.

Such an approach demanded numerous carefully chosen shots which, collectively, would present on the screen that *same* old-fashioned distant view, but now split up into countless cameos, each magnifying a particular characteristic, each drawing attention to something which, in the original long, long shot, would escape everyone's notice. However, that was but the *pictorial* revolution which occurred, and it was by no means enough, for apart from presenting a series of perfectly arranged dramatic shots, the creative documentalists knew it was imperative to give intelligent reasons why such places, such lives, and such customs were in existence. And so, the documentary narrative came into being, supplementing the shots, first in the form of finely phrased sub-titles, and later by well-written and perfectly spoken commentaries.

Sequences Built of Close-Ups

So it was with "Drifters"—a slice from the strenuous life of fishermen, wave upon wave of drama created by the moods of the sea, which was the 'star.' We watched the sturdy trawlers steaming out into certain storms, learnt of life on board, of the wrestling with nets, of the exciting return, and general quayside activity.

In this film we became acquainted with the art of building up an incident by means of a series of observant close-ups, each, in itself, comparatively meaningless, but seen with the others, telling the story vividly. The skilful art of accounting for time lapses, long and short, by cutting in other incidents, other faces, the sea, the smoking funnel, wave-washed decks, and so on, was established, and this, too, created that most essential of film values: a sense of simultaneous happenings—everything going on at once—as if the camera was in twenty different places at the same moment. Attention to photographic quality, too, was marked in the film. Without being too fussy or studied, each shot was carefully selected for the significance of its angle.

In those Soviet features, too, pictorial standards were equally advanced, and satirical pictorial parallels were well in evidence. Whether the political viewpoint expressed was right or wrong does not matter one iota, for the technique was right. I remember certain statues being cut in from low levels every time certain ruling personages were about to be referred to. I remember, too, fast cutting on a sequence showing guns firing—pure film drama, and actually a caricature of the actual event, being incredibly speeded up, but immense in its appeal.

Newly Developed Analytical Technique

Well, so much for that early programme. A year or so later, Grierson developed documentary films for the Empire Marketing Board, and I was associated with the editing and commentaries of numerous important two-reelers designed for cinema release. One was "The Country Comes To Town," directed by Basil Wright; and another, "Industrial Britain," shot by Flaherty. The first-mentioned dealt, in the newly developed analytical technique, with farm life—its regularity, its essential value to the city, and how city workers, far from the health-giving air of fields and hills, received its benefits in the form of dairy produce and milk delivered every day. There was an ingenious dissolve at the end of the film, from city workers streaming out of stations and over bridges, to the fields and farms of the countryside—the commentary stating that behind these scenes of commercial activity was the health of the countryside—the value of fresh pasturelands, in the portable form of farm produce.

DOCUMENTARY

AN IMPROVED TECHNIQUE

This is the third of an important series of articles designed to prepare the way for

THE NEW ORDER

in film production, a readjustment of values, the discarding of old mistaken ones, the working out of vital new values, so that film may take its rightful place in the forefront of entertainment and education. The series will comprise the following subjects: "Reshaping Feature Film Making," "Why 16mm. will be as important as 35mm.," "Descent of Dialogue—Ascent of Sound," "The Religious Film and the Future" and "The Mission of the Amateur." In previous articles Mr. Buchanan dealt with his experiences in fifteen years of professional film production and with the news-reel.

BUCHANAN

"Industrial Britain" was similarly outstanding for its pioneer work in putting industrial processes under the microscope, so to speak. Here, fine close shots of machinery showed, with emphasis, essential processes, in a way hitherto unattempted. The theme, too, was of first importance. It reminded us that every great industry depends, or originally depended, upon the craftsman without whose human touch machines would neither have been invented, nor could be maintained.

From every simple craft has grown a mass-produced equivalent. Flaherty was not content to film long shots of long factories, filled with long-faced workers looking uneasily into the camera. He made the camera peer into the very heart of the machines, compelled it to pick out the keen eyes of testers, the sensitive fingers of craftsmen, and trace the origin of each vast undertaking to its humble, *human* beginning. The films were a great success everywhere, and the public was beginning to appreciate the drama and pictorial attraction of everyday life.

The First Commercial Documentary

Simultaneously, I was developing the Cinemagazine which was heralded as the first *commercial* documentary film of a continuous nature. Naturally, I was compelled to work much faster than the documentalists engaged upon leisurely films, but I did not sacrifice quality for speed, and I intermingled the pure industrial, agricultural, and scientific sequences with material of a lighter nature, applying to it the *same technique*. That was important. I built up a trivial story about, say, a dance band, or a fashion show, with analytical close-ups, and thus established a method of screen journalism comparable to the written essay in the best type of magazine.

Slowly but surely the documentary movement grew, but it was never regarded of paramount *commercial* importance by the film industry as a whole. There was a general feeling that documentary films were too intelligent, too concerned with reality, and too little with entertainment. I bridged the gap there, and carried serious subjects right into the commercial cinema via the Cinemagazine. The documentalists as a whole did not penetrate so successfully. The G.P.O. Film Unit eventually superseded the Empire Marketing Board Film Department, and around Grierson gathered a band of young men who followed his general approach to film-making for non-theatrical purposes. As the industry did not acclaim such films, they began to create their own market outside cinemas, showing to specialised audiences. The G.P.O. Film Unit advanced steadily. Its output increased. To-day, incidentally, it has been renamed the Crown Film Unit, and is engaged exclusively on governmental production.

Now the one outstanding fact about the thwarted history of the British documentary film is that, as time went on, the public, both in and outside cinemas, developed an ever increasing liking for the fine technique in such productions, but realised they were seeing them less and less instead of more and more. This was due to the entry of double features. Gone were the days when a whole heap of shorts would comprise half the programme. Instead, only an occasional short would appear, and then it would probably be a cartoon, or an American travelogue (both excellent, but entirely unconnected to the advance made by our own documentalists).

An Extraordinary Situation

In time, this created one of the most extraordinary situations in filmdom's history, for documentary technique advanced rapidly, and, at the same time, programme space was more and more reduced, until such films were rarely, if ever, generally released. For a year or so before this war, the position was acute, and short films were facing extinction. But the documentary movement, anticipating this, had begun to build up a great system of release outside cinemas, to bodies of people in town and village halls, schools, colleges, and so on, and thus kept their work before the public. Entertainment values in the recognised sense of the word were never pronounced, but this was not greatly missed because the audiences, being unrelated to cinemas, did not altogether expect entertainment.

Nevertheless, I have always contended that despite the serious nature of the subject-matter of most documentary films, the absence of entertainment values, and, perhaps, most of all, the absence of a light touch has been the greatest fault in the movement. I do not suggest pandering unduly to box-office demands, but I do think that the light, subtle touch of a Lubitsch, or a Capra, is lacking in most documentalists, just as the direct, fine, analytical approach of the latter is often lacking in the directors of synthetic romances and comedies. Life's a mixture of tears and laughter, but documentary films rarely make one smile. However, we need to praise them for their amazing persistence, and their journey to success despite commercial obstacles.

War came, and by another stroke of ironic luck, it brought the shy documentalist into the limelight, because the government recognised the propaganda value of film, and turned immediately to the non-theatrical movement to supply it. As you know, to-day every cinema shows a brief documentary five-minute film, every week. That has given life to the movement. Also, a big programme of governmental non-theatrical films is in circulation to audiences outside cinemas, the system having, of course, had its foundations laid by the work of documentalists before the war, which built up such a non-theatrical release system because it could not secure cinema programme space.

Another scene from Eisenstein's "The General Line," designed to educate the Russian peasant to an appreciation of the value of the machine in agriculture. The directness of approach for which it is noted is due in great part to the fact that it had to appeal to uneducated minds.

It is anticipated that after the war the same amount of intensive propaganda will be needed, and so, the documentary movement seems more or less assured of a continued lease of life. More important is the fact that the public has become *accustomed* to seeing such short films, and, in most instances [illegible]ng them. I say, 'in most instances,' because criticism has not been backward in pointing to a certain stiltedness in some of the shorts so released, for the above-mentioned absence of humour and lack of entertainment values have become more noticeable, the weekly films being presented in the middle of giant programmes designed primarily to entertain, which encourages comparison, of course.

Apart from that, however, there is one other *basic* disadvantage—war or no war. All documentary films are sponsored (by governmental or other bodies), and no *voluntary* production is embarked

(*Continued on next page*)

A silhouette provides a oreground interest which is not only decorative but provides an integral feature of the composition.

upon by documentalists because they know they cannot regain production costs owing to lack of general release. This has resulted, apart from the impetus caused by the war, in but a spasmodic output, whereas wide success can only come from continuous release, as is obtained by all theatrical series unconcerned with propaganda requirements.

And so we come to the future of the documentary film. Is it to be always dependent on sponsors, and used for propaganda, whether good or bad, positive or negative in value? Is propaganda, *as we have come to know it*, quite the best kind of work to keep alive the documentary movement?

Propaganda

The questions are raised in view of the essential importance of the freedom of the creative artist. If he is forever obeying the instructions of people and bodies who wish particular messages projected, he has little hope of making films which shall give ample opportunity to his individualism. That is not always so, of course, because, as we have seen in Soviet films, out of pure governmental propaganda, pictorial drama was created, which exerted a maximum appeal to audiences in this country entirely removed from the issues forming such subject-matter. But, to regard propaganda of a comparatively narrow kind as enough, and to be wholly dependent upon sponsors for finance does have a crippling effect on the kind of film-makers who, more than any others, need complete freedom to produce subjects which may not necessarily express the viewpoints of any sponsors.

One may hope, however, that the tremendous prominence now being given to documentary work will ultimately result in the establishment of the movement on sufficiently solid foundations to enable it to advance in its special directions, and, while not casting aspersions on propaganda as known to-day, I quite definitely contend that it will be by no means enough for the future.

The beautiful French films we were just becoming accustomed to when war broke out combined realism with fiction in brilliant fashion, and America has begun to like them, too. They provided fine propaganda for France, but they were *not* propaganda films. Many of the greatest American feature films have presented constructive propaganda for America, but they were categorised as entertainment

Advance of the Documentary

(*Continued from previous page*)

and *not* propaganda. *Recognisable propaganda creates its own limitations.* Indirect propaganda (and it exists in everything) is, or should be, of infinitely greater value. The world of the future will need every foot of film documentalists can make to aid the task of reshaping civilization along finer lines, but I fear that if narrow propaganda distracts them from this task, the result will be seriously delayed. After all, the best propaganda of all for a nation, a group of nations, or, indeed, for humanity, is, in the long run, good films: fine, imaginative human stories reflecting life as it is, and, possibly, *as it might be*, too.

I often think we should forget the word 'propaganda.' It has a way of percolating into everything, and is often lacking in vision, primarily because it is not propaganda for the good of all men, but only for the good of those belonging to some particular nation. I visualise a future planned by the bolder of the documentalists, who will dedicate their lives to projecting a way to make the world saner—pointing to its basic, simple laws, and to the fundamental bond linking all men and women. Pointing, also, to the beauties and the fruits of the earth, accessible to all, and to the way in which the qualities of sacrifice and bravery inherent in the human race can be diverted into *constructive* channels, instead of being imprisoned and used almost exclusively for destruction.

That is a task for documentalists who possess a vision broad enough to enable them to see that, while they are technicians without equal, they need to gain experience from the purveyors of entertainment in order to imbue their films with the necessary lighter moments which will guarantee success before the largest possible audiences.

Facing the Future

America has recognised the documentary. It has its own school of film-makers who also are concentrating upon presenting a creative interpretation of reality, while here, numerous established documentalists have formed their own groups and companies for the especial purpose of building up an even greater output. Thus, all the signs are there—and all the opportunities, and after the war, millions will be seeking a new way of life which shall recognise the importance of the individual, regardless of colour, creed, or country.

If propagandists insist, too long, on harnessing the genius of the nation's film-makers to their own specific national requirements, humanity will lose, but if, as I fully anticipate, vision will ultimately dominate the situation, then we can look forward with confidence to documentary films penetrating further and further into theatrical and non-theatrical life, and gradually becoming more 'human' in presentation. That will be a moment to wait for, because the screen provides an empty frame in the picture gallery *of the world*, belonging to all nations, and it is waiting to be filled by a succession of filmic masterpieces, inspired by an urge to aid suffering humanity. I believe documentalists were born to achieve this noble purpose.

I believe, too, they will succeed.

"FANTASOUND"

A NEW development in sound technique has been evolved for Walt Disney's third feature-length film, "Fantasia," the premiere of which is now taking place in New York and Hollywood. It makes use of 36 speakers behind the screen and 44 in the auditorium, the latter to produce the illusion that the sound is actually coming from among the audience.

For instance, in the closing scenes, "Ave Maria" is played. The orchestra (says William Stull, in the "American Cinematographer") is played on the down-stage speakers, as is the vocal choir. When the solo voice enters, it is first played only on the rear speakers, then faded to the ceiling speakers, and finally to the down-stage speakers on one side only. The effect is that the voice begins at the rear of the auditorium, floats gradually across the top of the house, and finally comes to rest at the front side of the stage.

The system is known as "Fantasound" and is much too complicated for general use. "R.C.A. is understood to be building ten sets of 'Fantasound' reproducers, which will be utilised in special travelling presentations of 'Fantasia.' It is not at present intended to release this production generally at any time, but instead to make it a perpetual special show, producing a new version each year." The special sound film (separate from the picture film) used contains three sound tracks and a control track.

HOME THOUGHTS OF AN EVACUEE

Cine Causerie

by Cinnamon

In this new series of chats on practical cine topics, the writer, a well-known exponent of cinematography, shows how it is possible to retain one's enthusiasm for cine work, even though, like himself, one has to relinquish many pre-war activities.

IN spite of evacuation to a small place in Wales and in spite of much longer working hours, I still find time for cine. I have done no work with the camera, it is true, but there are already eight or ten shows to credit, with more to come, while so many are the facets of our gem of a hobby that I constantly find myself thinking of some new idea which will be of use when I find the time.

Already I have made cine friends, several of them readers of *A.C.W.* One of them came to see me because his copy had not arrived, my address having been given by the newsagent. It was while showing him some gadgets that I again began to think round an idea in range-finders. The range-finder in question is a very simple affair, made of a piece of cardboard (Fig. 1). The card is held at arm's length and, shutting the right eye, the card is moved until the top left corner is seen to be in line with the object of which the distance is to be measured. The left eye is then quickly closed and the right eye opened. The point on the scale at the top of the card against which the object is now seen gives the distance of the object.

Like nearly all range-finders it works by means of a fixed base line and a means of measuring the angles at the ends of that line. In this case the base line is provided by the distance between the two eyes (Fig. 2). When the card is held at arm's length the scale on the top of the card provides a measure of the distance of the apex of the triangle.

This range-finder is not a commercial proposition. You must make it for yourself, for the scale will depend upon the distance between your own two eyes and the length of your own arm. In use it requires a reasonably steady hand, or the card will have moved in the very short time in which you shut one eye, open the other and then adjust the focus of the right eye to read the point on the scale.

It would seem to be one of those ideas which are very old and which are rediscovered from time to time as the need arises. When it was explained before the Royal Photographic Society in 1936 it was quite new to me and when I later wrote an account of it, the description was copied abroad. Before then it is clear that it was either unknown or very little known.

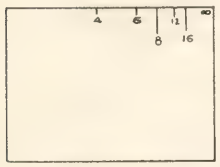


Fig 1

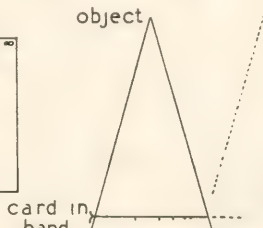


Fig 2

Fig 3

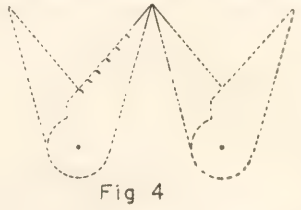


Fig 4

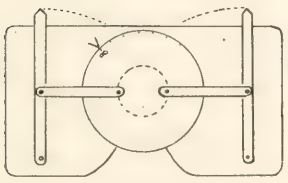


Fig 5

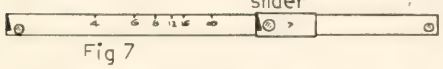


Fig 7

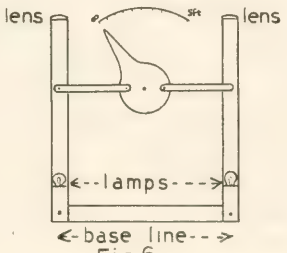


Fig 6

To make the card you first find the width of it by looking in a mirror. Hold a post card just below the level of the eyes and, with a pencil, mark the top edge at the points where the pupils of the eyes can be seen above the card. Cut the card to this width and then check that this works satisfactorily for infinity by trying it on a distant object. Then by trial find the marks on the scale for the distances which are engraved on the lens you are using.

Remember that the distance on the lens should be measured from the plate into which the lens is fastened. Then check the markings on the card. The distance from the right corner of the card to the 4ft. mark is twice the distance to the 8ft. mark, and that is twice the distance to the 16ft. mark. Similarly, again measuring from the right, the 6ft. mark will be twice the distance to the 12ft. mark.

There have been several fairly recent developments of this method of using the eyes as a base line for a range-finder and, when my visitor had gone, I began looking up one or two notes I had made. Some people have difficulty in shutting one eye at a time, and some of these methods avoid this difficulty. The simplest consists merely of a triangular card about eight inches high with a base of about three inches. If this is held at arm's length and the eyes are fixed on a distant object there will be seen, not one card, but two. (Fig. 3). With the eyes fixed on the object the card is moved until the point of intersection of the two visible cards (X in the drawing) is in line with the object. The thumb is then run up the side of the card to mark this point of intersection.

This point on the edge of the card gives a measure of the distance of the object and by means of trial, a scale can be marked down the side of the card. This method was described by Edward J. Ramaley in "American Photography" and was republished in "The British Journal of Photography" of 12th May, 1939.

Another somewhat similar method can be demonstrated with a pair of fairly large scissors. If they are held at arm's length and opened, two pairs of scissors will be seen if one looks at a distant object. The scissors are then opened until the adjacent points which are visible appear to touch one another. When viewing a nearer object it will be found that the scissors require to be slightly closed. By making a pair of cardboard "scissors" (Fig. 4) and marking a scale down one of the blades, H. Morris, Jr., has described how his range-finder was made ("Amateur Photographer," 5.12.40).

My own experiments with the "two eyes open" method employed in these last two devices show that, in looking at the distant object and at the same time watching the appearance of the "meter," which is much closer, there is a marked tendency for the eyes to cease to concentrate on the object and to come to rest on some nearer point. With the "one-eye-at-a-time" method this is less noticeable and, as I have no difficulty in shutting one eye only, I prefer it. The "scissors" can, in fact, be used in this way.

For Use in Badly Lit Places

It seemed to me that this last method might be improved if a more sensitive control of the points could be arranged. In this I had in mind a range-finder described by H. H. Goodchild ("British Journal of Photography" 15.12.39). This does not use the two eyes as base line and is intended for use in dark places (Fig. 6). Two small filament lamps, worked from a battery, are projected, each through its own small lens, at the end of movable rods, so that the images come to a focus at about eight feet distance.

The two rods are moved together until the two projected images of the lamp filaments overlap on the object to be photographed. The nearer the object, then the nearer will the ends of the rods be to one another. The method illustrated, by which the indicator is moved over the scale, is interesting in that it avoids the squeezing up of the scale for the greater distances, such as occurs in the other meters described.

I therefore made a meter adopting this

(*Continued on page 71*)

IT HAPPENED TO ME

SCARED OF THE MICROPHONE

Readers are invited to contribute to this new series. The passport to publication is a novel, unusual, humorous or out-of-the-way movie experience. Please write, or type, on one side of the paper only. Address on page 51

IT was not my mere efficiency in selling stamps and postal orders that gave me my first adventure in movie-making. The G.P.O. Film Unit (now working for the M. of I.) were about to produce "Telegrams," their first all-coloured talking film, when their director applied to the Post Office for "a man behind the counter." My chief, in consequence, was in a dilemma. He knew nothing of Chaplin, Gable or Beery; neither did he know what a miserable failure I had been as an actor. But he had heard whispers of my notoriety as a producer of amateur plays. So why should he consider the matter further! I was told to report to the Blackheath Studios at 8.0 a.m. the very next morning.

I was worried—frightened, in fact. True, I had been producing plays for years—and quite successfully. I seem to have acquired the queer knack of making others do what I can't do myself!

A "Rich Cockney Accent"

Acting! I began by playing Percy, the cyclist brother of Tilly of Bloomsbury. When the curtain fell on that performance I was happy; until a lady, a teacher of elocution with countless honours, letters and diplomas, complimented me on having such a "rich Cockney accent," I wasn't happy any longer. Little does that lady know how her words have haunted me every time I have crossed the stage. Many a time have I stood in the dim light of back-stage awaiting my cue, trembling—and thinking: "You've got a rich cockney accent!"

And it was in this frame of mind that I entered the front door of the Blackheath Studios. For a while I stood on the mat. The place seemed deserted. But somewhere I could hear a muffled rattle and roar of industry. A polite cough proved ineffective. Then I saw a large notice glaring at me from above a door. It demanded SILENCE. With the utmost care and caution I turned the lock and opened the door ——.

Silence indeed! Here was pandemonium. I had walked right into the set. Everywhere, everybody, it seemed, was making a noise of some sort. Shirt-sleeved men were hammering, sawing, shouting, cursing, whistling and joking; to these men I meekly said, "Where is the art director?" None answered my enquiry, but one and all greeted me as though they had known me for years. Up aloft electricians were wrestling with gigantic arc-lamps. On the floor the camera-man was looking for his assistant . . .

Petrification

Suddenly all this ant-like activity became dim. A familiar dryness caught my throat. "A rich Cockney accent" was ringing in my ears. I had found the microphone.

The scene under construction was that of a post-office public counter. Above this counter was a "boom" carrying the "mike." And an elegant young man in velveteen slacks and a green flannel shirt was adjusting it. Here, then, was my enemy and the one man above all whom I feared. I had the urge to go while the going was good, when I was found by the art director. And the rest of the day was one of the happiest I have ever experienced.

Never did I imagine my years of service in the Post Office would be put to such artistic account. I was continually at the service of the director. Was this right? Was that wrong? What forms are usually found on the counter? We must have money in the till! Has anybody got any change? Would I mind seeing the teleprinters put through? What do boy messengers do while waiting to deliver telegrams? And on and on all day until 8 p.m., when the director "called it one." It had been thrilling—but to-morrow I had to become an actor and face that "mike"!

Strictly to time, I arrived at the studio. Scenic artists were already putting finishing touches to the scenery. Electricians were having a last look round. The camera was

Knee-bending at the counter.

in position. The director, with his coat off and full of energy, greeted me with a grunt and a string of queries. "Another day like yesterday?" I suggested. But I was assured we should be all set for an early start.

The rest of the cast, teleprinter operators and a "customer" had arrived. They, too, were making a first appearance—all very excited and very keen. But as the time slowly passed, and the prospects of taking anything gradually diminished, enthusiasm evaporated.

By 11.0 a.m., however, everybody was cleared off the set. We were ready at last! "Counter clerk!" yelled the director. "Where the blazes is the counter clerk?" "It's me, and I'm here," I replied meekly. "You! But aren't you the technical adviser from the Post Office?" If only I had been, my troubles would have been over. Instead, I now had to face the music.

I am at home behind a grille. But to stand before a camera, and to be bathed in thousands of watts, with a "Dufay" man checking up "hot spots" all around you, is horribly unnerving. And all the while just above my head was the "mike," out of sight of the camera, of course, but well within the range of my "rich Cockney accent."

Ah well, there was no time to think about that, for the producer was explaining the action. "Just walk into the picture," he concluded. I did. "Hold it! How's that?" "Rotten!" said the camera-man.

"The trouble is"—the producer glared at me—"you're too darned tall." Splendid, I thought. Was this my get-out? "Bend yourself at the knees," he said. "It will never be noticed behind the counter . . . That's better. But do stand still! You're bobbing up and down like a cork. That's it! Now remain like that."

And I did. I was thinking too much of all I had to say and do to worry about being over at the knees. Especially as I heard the camera-man say the film cost one shilling a foot!

Someone shouted "Shoot!" A loud bell jangled. An awful quiet followed. The camera was turning. A clap from "clappers"—I knew the "curtain was up."

The "customer" entered with her telegram. Literally shaking at the knees, I entered the picture.

The Eavesdropping 'Mike'

"Cut!—start again." And then the elegant young man in charge of sound politely informed me to stick to the script. You see, in my anxiety and physical discomfort I had muttered something which nobody heard—except the "mike" and the young man at the recording desk.

At the second attempt we sailed along smoothly, until it came to my first line. "That's a shilling, please!" "Oh, good heavens, cut!" yelled the young man, wrenching off his headphones in disgust. "Didn't you hear that car back-fire?"

So that was how he alluded to my "rich Cockney accent!" We'd see about that. There was no need to, as the director agreed that the studio was infernally noisy. The dialogue could be recorded later in the theatre. And so we went on until 4.0 p.m. During this time we did ten scenes. And my warning to any film aspirant is: "Get into a documentary and you'll get out of films for good."

I hated the whole business so much that I've since invested in an 8mm. camera, and once more I find I'm making others do that which I can't do myself!

A. W. ENGLAND.

ABOLITION OF TRIP WIRE

At a recent meeting of the R.S.P.C.A. and the Association of Motion Picture Producers it was agreed to abolish the trip-wire, which was the basis of 80% of the complaints of cruelty to horses in films. It consisted of a wire passed under the belly band of the animal, one end being fixed to the collar and the other to a stout stake, so that when the animals were made to stampede, they were thrown violently to the ground and often killed or badly injured. Horses doing stunts will now have to be trained; already there are more than a dozen of them available for use.

METROVICK EXPOSURE METER

Owing to increased costs of material, labour and the like, Messrs. R. F. Hunter Ltd. announce that it has been necessary to increase the price of the Metrovick exposure meter to £6 13s. 10d. (including Purchase Tax). This applies to all three models—Cine, Universal and Leica. Each model is supplied in ever-ready leather-case as heretofore.

Secrets of the Studio

The Work of the Art Director

BEFORE the war, those of us who had any contacts with the professional film world were frequently coming across rather willowy young men who volubly asserted that they were 'assistant art directors.' We knew that this status was scarcely as important as it sounded, that the assistant art director was, in fact, very often a general run-about. But though one may know what an assistant art director is *not*, it is not so easy to be sure what an art director *is*.

Now comes Edward Carrick to tell us all about it in "Designing for Moving Pictures" (Studio Publications, 8s. 6d.). Carrick is the son of the famous Gordon Craig. From 1927 to 1936 he did some very good work in scene designing for British companies. In 1937 he founded and directed the first school in England devoted entirely to the study and practice of art as applied to films. Of the students at this school he tells us that the majority wanted a six months' course and the promise of a job. They wanted to plan amazingly elaborate revue settings and huge backgrounds for historical epics, and were quite taken aback when they were made to realise that their most important job was to design *unobtrusive* backgrounds to aid the dramatic action.

The Only One

It is this principle which informs "Designing for Moving Pictures." It relates the design to the whole and, in doing so, reveals how vital to the film the work of the art designer is. We cannot say that Carrick's book is the best book on cinema design that has ever appeared, for, as far as we know, it is the only one to deal exclusively with this subject. But at least we can affirm that it is a very good and important work that should be studied not only by the aspirant but by everyone interested in the film as an art.

The amateur, in particular, should find it of value, for its shining integrity of purpose and the belief it voices in the necessity for freedom of expression are disciplined by a sober consideration of the demands of technique and of pounds, shillings and pence. And the author propounds, too, the necessity for discipline for its own sake. The beautiful set design, redolent of atmosphere and expressive of artistry and penetrating imagination, so often defeats its own purpose. Often one sees sets that bear very little resemblance to the original design—usually because the design is *too* original.

People Before Backgrounds

People are more important than their backgrounds. Carrick advocates putting in the figures and building up the set round them. He looks on the art director more as a book illustrator than a scenic artist. And since 'close-ups are the most important things in films,' his first advice to the would-be designer is to keep a sketch book for records of the little details—of rooms, streets, and so on—that are the index of the character of the people who live in those rooms and walk those streets.

For the art director the proper study of art is man. It is not essential for him to know how to make a perfect drawing of a Corinthian column—he can find out from scores of books; it is far more important that he should know the history of the social conditions of the times he has to illustrate.

Even so, technical skill must be married to imagination. "Don't come into films at all," he says in the foreword, "unless you are also going to help wholeheartedly to make it the greatest medium of expression that man has ever handled"; his book, by explaining the various film processes from inception of the design to the appearance of the scene on the screen, also contains a tacit warning against the thrusting in of the unskilled hand.

Members of United Film Productions working on a laboratory set for their 16mm. post-synchronised film, "Deciding Factor."

It begins with a brief chapter on "The Growth of a New Art"; its omissions make it a little one-sided, but the defect is not of any real importance. "How a Film is Made" is a short general discourse on film production from the point of view of the art director. He tells in it how he built a ship for "Midshipman Easy" on a platform 45 feet high to get above the surrounding trees of the lot and make it possible to secure real clouds instead of a studio background. And he notes in passing that "if the hero and the heroine are seated on a stile and chatting about love, it is quite a common thing to see one of the sound recorder's assistants shoot a pistol into the air to silence the birds in the neighbourhood."

The main body of the work is contained in "Designing, Drawing and Planning" and "Departments, Materials and Effects." Writing of colour, he advances an uncompromising point of view that will be heartening to the amateur:

"There is a lot of talk about colour, presumably to make it sound more difficult, and in order to make it necessary to bring in colour experts, but if you rig yourself up with Kodachrome film and try a few experiments photographing natural objects at different times of the day, as well as artificial objects, painted in colours mixed from different ingredients and put on in different ways and record the results, you will soon discover all that it is necessary to know about colour reproduction."

A Home-Made View-Finder

He might have added that in some of the major studios 16mm. Kodachrome is now used as a regular routine for set, wardrobe and location tests before shooting with Technicolor. Ordinary substandard cameras are used (chiefly the Magazine Cine Kodak and the 70D-A Filmo) by the professional crews. Kodachrome and Technicolor do not, of course, yield identical colour renderings, but the results are quite comparable. For a long time there has been a rumour that Technicolor would become a single film process, like Kodachrome; if the change is made, the use of Kodachrome by the professionals should certainly be much more widespread.

For viewing his sets after they have been built, Carrick uses a home-made viewfinder. "I made mine up with ordinary 1s. 6d. reducing glass with some black adhesive tape stuck round the edge, leaving a frame 16 by 22mm. (for the standard size frame, of course). I have a silver pencil marked off at different spacings for 1 in., 2 in. and 3 in. lenses, and view the set by placing the end of the pencil against my cheek-bone and putting the reducing-glass to the engraved lens number."

Those Mirror Floors

"Departments, Materials, Effects" contains a mine of information on the ingredients and methods used. Here are some examples, taken more or less at random:

For doors that have to be broken in and furniture that has to be smashed, Balsa wood is used. For attic scenes and half-timbered houses, planks are hacked about with axes or adzes and smoothed with blow lamps and wire brushes to get the effect of age. Special varnished paper is used to represent parquet flooring. Those wonderful black mirror floors on which spectacular dances are performed are made from thick brown paper, first shellaced and then painted over with high gloss spirit varnish paint. Marble is imitated simply and cheaply by floating oil or water colours on gum-water and laying lengths of tinted wallpaper on the surface.

"The best fog is made by putting a couple of white smoke bombs into a wooden box with a heavy lid and two handles, and just before the take the lid is opened and the box is carried in and across the set, and the smoke is broken up by switching on an electric fan for a second or two. When this is back-lighted it gives a magnificent effect."

(*Continued on page 72*)

A.R.P. FILMS

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Letters to the Editor

Thirty-Year-Old Prophecy Fulfilled

Sir,—May I add to "Shots that Remain in the Memory" the opening shot of the silent film, "Transcontinental Limited." The whole screen was blacked out, with the exception of a small and steadily flickering point of light in the lower left hand corner. This gradually grew larger, until one suddenly became aware that the "light" was that falling on the floor of a tunnel, curving to the left into the daylight ; and that the steady movement was that of the connecting rod of a locomotive, going out of the tunnel, the spectator being on the train. The effect was startling, owing to the fact that it was some little time before one grasped what the "light" represented.

In view of the interest evident in recent issues on the early days of the cinema, I am venturing to enclose a copy of part of an article which appeared in a part work which I took in when a youth, and which is still in my possession :

"Cinematography is now so popular and so profitable that the development of the scientific and mechanic side of the art goes on with great rapidity. Probably the next advance in the machine will make the cinematograph so cheap and safe that it will be brought, like the bicycle and the talking machine, within the reach of everybody with a moderate income. Edison is already selling a machine at £10 ; and all that is required is an inexpensive film and a new kind of 'Mudies' at which subscribers can change their films every two or three days.

"When films can be printed quickly in large quantities, the moving picture will become as much a part of our home life as the six-shilling book. The novel reader will order picture-plays from the cinematograph library ; the newspaper reader will delight in the topical film ; and lovers of travel and strange countries, and students of natural history and science, will entertain and instruct themselves with the pictures produced by men like Mr. F. Percy Smith and Dr. J. Comander."

(*Harmsworth Popular Science. Vol.* 3. 1911-12).

Kettering. H. D. Williams.

BEST AND WORST SHOTS

Sir,—Best and worst shots now ! I think I can recall a shot that comes into both categories. Photographically it was extremely beautiful—so much so that I still remember it, though it was one shot only, not a series or a sequence—but for this very reason it drew attention to itself unduly and thus was out of place in the film.

I refer to the shot of Glowrie Castle in "The Ghost Goes West." No doubt it was a hanging miniature or, at any rate, a product in part of trick work, but it looked most substantial, and the composition of the scene was superb. I felt that I would like to have seen much more of it, yet however much of it was shown, the action would not have been advanced in any way ; indeed, it would have been retarded.

The Editor is always glad to publish readers' views, but publication does not necessarily imply that he endorses the views expressed.

A will-o'-the-wisp shot of this kind cannot be good technique—and yet I should be sorry were such delightful aberrations for ever banned in the sacred cause of film art. I think it must have been an aberration, for has not Rene Clair declared that : "the public is less interested in truth than in illusions" ?

Horsham. R. F. Craig

A LIBRARY OF AMATEUR FILMS

Sir,—Mr. W. H. Bolton puts forward an interesting suggestion in his letter (May issue), but in my view it is quite an impracticable one. A film on which many different hands have been at work is unlikely to prove an artistic entity, and by following such a plan the amateur would be relinquishing his chief asset : complete freedom. As I see it, the contributor to your correspondent's suggested film of the British Isles would have to be concerned only with the photography. Liaison work would, presumably, have to be done by correspondence, but I fail to see how the director (for there would have to be a director) could achieve his object without personal contacts.

Mr. Bolton specifies that the treatment would be mainly from the scenic point of view, but surely even this would not ensure uniformity of approach and expression. In the case of a film which could not be treated from this angle, it seems to me that the problems of co-ordination would be well-nigh insuperable. Last year I read that a number of cine societies proposed to produce a joint effort, each club to be given a number of sequences to produce, but nothing further has been heard of the project, so that it is to be presumed that the difficulties (and soft-pedalling of all club activities) proved too much.

Why not adopt the scheme that has already been put forward in *A.C.W.* and create an organisation (if the commercial libraries will not) to purchase and circulate existing amateur films of merit ? The existence of such an organisation would be a stimulus to better work, so that the future is likely to be assured without the commissioning of set subjects. It is plain that good amateur work is not lacking to-day, and possibly many of those whose work would be accepted for a 'composite' film, such as Mr. Bolton suggests, would already have completed productions that would be acceptable.

Llandudno. I. Hewes.

THE AMATEUR'S MENTOR

Sir,—I was pleased to see the tribute to Flaherty in Mr. Mason's letter in the last issue, for I have always felt that this director is by far the finest mentor that the amateur cinematographer has ever had. Even in his later sound films he is concerned almost entirely with the *picture*. Sound is to him but an unobtrusive accompaniment—seldom a commentary—that adds to the realism but in

no way restricts the freedom of the camera.

When I say that he is the amateur's finest mentor, I am bearing in mind the many excellent documentary films produced in this country, but I feel that in so many of them one senses the director's intention that they shall be truly documents, that they shall instruct, show a cross-section of reality and present the director's own particular interpretation of it. One occasionally catches the atmosphere of the schoolroom. There is none of that in Flaherty's work, perhaps because he is so independent in outlook and, I believe, in method. Rigid time schedules are not for him.

It is a great pity that he seems to have produced nothing for a very long time. Men of his calibre are more than ever needed to-day in the film world.

Luton. C. PIPER.

(Flaherty went to America two years ago to make a film called " The Land," designed to show the part the machine plays in the business of making a living from agriculture. Latest information is that the film is now ready for release in America and will presumably be shown over here. It is reported that Flaherty travelled 20,000 miles with his two cameramen and exposed about 100,000 feet of film, about half of which has been used in the production. This proportion of selected to exposed film would be a most commendable one for any professional film director, and is certainly quite astonishing for Flaherty.—EDITOR).

LIBRARY FILMS

Sir,—May I raise again a subject which, I see, was commented on in your pages as far back as 1937? I feel, however, that it should be ventilated again and again until the position is rectified. I refer to the obsolete films which, with a few exceptions, are put out for us in the silent film libraries. Most of them are more than ten years old and to any average adult audience seem rather puerile.

Personally, I usually screen these films to a carefully selected audience which I know can appreciate them, so they pass all right; but surely, to be able to show them only to a limited few is to cramp the purpose for which a film is intended. The sound libraries are very well supplied indeed, but must we change over to sound? Many of us cannot afford to do so.

I appreciate the many difficulties encountered in preparing professional films for amateur consumption; not the least of them is the fact that many sound films are not suitable for condensation or translation into the silent medium. But these difficulties are not insuperable. There are numbers of sound films of five years or more ago which would prove very suitable, and deserve a better fate than the junk heap. Even the present library documentaries are rather poor and far between.

I may add that I have seen and *enjoyed* most of the film classics in the libraries, and have profited by their lessons—but then what about the ordinary audience? They expect entertainment, not education.

Dunston/Tyne, 11. P. B. GREEN.

EXCITER LAMP FOR BOLEX

Sir,—Readers may be interested to know that, as the 2 volt exciter lamps fitted to the Bolex sound projector are now unobtainable

(*Continued on next page*)

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Huddersfield. S. SCHOFIELD.

KINE

Sir,—" The Kine Section of the R.P.S. still spells cine with a K for the sake of correctness." (Mr. Harry Walden in a letter last month). On whose authority ? There is no such word as 'kine' (other than meaning cattle) and for the past thirty years Webster and the Encyclopedia Britannica have given 'cinematograph' as the accepted spelling. The retention of obsolete and archaic forms of spelling does not lend dignity to the user—even if the words he uses were once so spelt.

It is rather amusing to note that Mr. Walden points to accepted practice when rebuking others for misuse of words, for he writes that 'societies that exist for the study of professional films . . . have, *by common usage*, come to be known as "Film" societies.'
London, E.C. 3. D.R.B.

OUR FILM CRITICISM SERVICE

I have to thank you for your helpful criticism of my film, "London's River." I have made the alterations suggested by you, and must say that they have made an enormous improvement to the film as a whole. —*L.D., London, S.W.15.*

(Our film criticism service continues to function as in peace time. If you have a film you want reviewed, please send us a postcard asking for a date to be reserved for its screening. A leader is awarded for those films which reach a reasonable standard of merit).

Round the Societies

IT is good to learn that membership of the **Edinburgh C.S.** (23, Fettes Row) has increased, since the commencement of the winter session, to 45 members and associate members. Further, it has been able to hold meetings regularly every week. They have been devoted mainly to the showing of amateur films and, when this has not been possible, to professional films (silent and sound). Members and friends have also given lectures and practical demonstrations.

Production, though necessarily limited, has been possible. The newer type of documentary film is being attempted and will be encouraged. The Junior Section has its own production in hand. At a recent meeting the society was given a preview of a salvage propaganda film, "Youth at the (Salvage) Helm," showing what can be done by the voluntary effort of children to assist the country's war effort. A social evening made it possible for the society to hand over £4 14 0 to the Red Cross.

The summer session commenced on May 2nd. Annual subscription is one guinea ; junior members and those without apparatus, 5/-. Members of the Forces interested in amateur cinematography will be very welcome at any meeting ; and, of course, any prospective new member is warmly invited to pay a visit.

The member who sends us the above news writes : " I was never a member of a society, but feel now that it is the only way to keep in touch with amateur cinematography these days. I think there is no doubt that 'creating and sharing' is the better plan, and I am sure there will be many more societies springing up when things improve."

* * *

The **Armley C.S.** (Hon. Sec. : Walter Greenwood, 10, Scarborough Street, Leeds, 12) have removed to new premises which provide better facilities than the old ones ; space is more ample and there is a ready-made projection room which only requires ports for it to be ready for screenings. Rewiring is in progress, a new proscenium is nearly ready and simple decorations should be finished for the first 'open' night in June.

The club is concentrating on projection for the first quarter, but hope to make a film very shortly, when an *A.C.W.* leader is the initial goal to be aimed at. The calls of National Service are, of course, very heavy on the existing personnel, consequently new members, both technical and those interested in acting, would still be welcome.

* * *

June 10th is competition night for the 'Fortune Club Shield' which will go to the member of the **Keighley & District Cine Circle** who has made the most meritorious film of the year. Competition is likely to be keen, for many good films have been entered.

A visit to Hardcastle Craggs is planned for May 25th ; it is hoped that opportunities for filming will present themselves. Barden Tower and Burnsall will be visited on June 22nd ; they should provide some good shots. On July 8th Walter Greenwood will give a programme of sound films in the club's theatre. The midsummer programme concludes with a visit to Malham on July 20th.

Recent meetings have included a lecture on travel in Switzerland (with colour films) by W. Haggas and a lecture by P. H. E. Rostern on cine photography, illustrated with diagrams, still pictures and films. This last was followed by a series of films on animal life in Canada.

* * *

The latest **I.A.C.** News-Letter to reach us contains news of the Institute's 'S.O.F. Pool.' Any I.A.C. member owning a sound-film projector may join the pool by notifying the Hon. Sec. (50, High Street, Epsom) of details of his machine and any sound films in his possession which he would be willing to make available to other S.O.F. members. The Institute will circularize S.O.F. members with particulars of films available and will, from time to time as funds permit, purchase copies of outstanding films for their use.

A charge of 2/6 per reel will be made for hire ; 1/6 of this will be passed to the owner of the film to cover his expenses, and the remaining shilling will be put to an S.O.F. fund for the purchase of further sound films. The expenses of the Pool will be borne by the Institute. The charge will normally be for one day's use of film. Longer periods —by arrangement—will entail an additional charge of 6d. per reel a day, all of which will be devoted to the fund. Borrowers undertake

to reimburse the I.A.C. for cost of repair or replacement to films which have sustained damage while in their possession, and for loss or damage in return transit. Registered post is therefore advised.

Owners of films will retain them in their possession. Applications, with the appropriate fee, for loan should be made to the hon. treasurer at least 14 days before the date of showing. He will then forward the application to the owner, together with part of the fee. Owners are asked to forward their film(s) to borrowers at least three days prior to the date required and to make full allowance for holidays and other special circumstances.

Since their last report, **Isis Motion Pictures** (Hon. Sec. : P. S.-G. Spencer, St. John's College, Oxford) have made great progress with their first picture. Shooting began on May 11th. The theme of the film has undergone some change since it was first announced in *A.C.W.* Instead of being devoted entirely to the Thames it will have for its main setting a nearby farm ; and while demonstrating the picturesqueness of the Oxford countryside, it is hoped to present something of the life of a farmer. A sound commentary will be added after shooting.

Regular meetings for the discussion and exhibition of films are now to be held. The first has been fixed for May 19th.

Your Problems Solved

Here are a selection of recent replies. All replies are sent by post. No coupon is required, but please remember to enclose a stamped addressed envelope. And please give as full details as possible in your query, for the more data we have to go upon the more helpful the reply.

ENLARGEMENTS FROM 9.5 mm.

For some time I have been using a Pathe "Ace" projector for making ¼-plate enlargements from 9.5 mm. film, and the results have been quite satisfactory. I wish, however, to get still better results, and am considering the use of my 200B projector for this purpose. It would, of course, be necessary to reduce the power of the lamp (105v., 200w., working through a resistance). Can you suggest a way of reducing the power sufficiently to ensure that the film will not be damaged during the few seconds it has to remain stationary in the gate ?

I wish also to ascertain the size of picture obtained with 9.5 mm. film using a Dallmeyer 76 mm. Superlight projector lens in the 200B (for ordinary projection purposes.)—*F.F.*

One very simple way of reducing the power of the projector lamp is to set the adjustment on the mains resistance to its maximum setting (i.e., probably 250 volts marking) so that the whole of the available resistance is in circuit. This will cut down the light to a considerable extent. In addition, you can interpose a piece of thin wire gauze between the lamp and the condenser, or between the condenser and the back of the film gate, in order also to reduce the transmitted heat.

You can produce a lens-picture size graph for the focal length lens you mention very quickly by setting up the projector, focussing accurately fairly close to the machine (about 5 feet away) measuring the size of the image on the screen, and then moving the screen away to, say, 10 feet or 15 feet, and measuring the image size again. Plot these two sets of figures against each other and draw a straight line from the zero point of the intersection of the two parts of the graph, through the two sets of figures obtained, when all other sizes may be found.

SOUND RECORDING ON FILM

P.B.B.—When film is used for sound recording it is usually pulled over the periphery of a fairly large diameter drum. This pulling of the film is an extremely important part of the process, since its travel must be perfectly even and without any variation in speed. The drum over which the film runs usually rotates on the same shaft as a heavy flywheel, so that the motion is smooth and without flutter.

The lamp used for generating the exposure light of fluctuating intensity is usually of the "glow discharge" type, i.e., similar to a neon tube such as is used for shop and advertising signs. Alternative systems use a constant intensity light source, with a slit or aperture which opens and closes according to the electrical energy received from the microphone and associated amplifiers. The slit may either be a mechanical one or may be larger than the image on the film, in which latter case the slit itself is focussed on to the film by a microscope system.

S.M.P.E. OR D.I.N. ?

A.J.S.—The 16mm. sound-on-film standard now in use in this country is that put forward by the S.M.P.E. (Society of Motion Picture Engineers of America). The D.I.N. standard was the same as the S.M.P.E. in dimensions, but the drawings were misread and the standard reversed left to right. Some machines were built to the continental standard, but generally only those taking the S.M.P.E. standard sound-films are now manufactured. Some machines, by a sliding arrangement of the sound-head, will take either type of film.

9.5mm. SOUND-ON-FILM

W.J.C.—With the film emulsion upwards, i.e., facing you, and the image the right way up, then : 1. The allowance for the picture image extends from the left-hand side of the film, 7.65mm. 2. Then there is a black printed border to the sound-track for masking purposes, 0.35mm. wide. 3. The track itself, maximum modulation, lying at the right-hand side of the film, is 0.71mm. wide. 4. The balance of the film width, i.e., 0.79 mm. width, is again a black border forming the right-hand edge mask of the track. 5. The projection image measures 6.85mm. (width) by 5.87mm. (height).

PROJECTOR LAMP ADJUSTMENT

I am having difficulty in obtaining a really strong bright picture. It would appear that the lamp may have been moved forward, almost touching the condenser. I have put it back where I think two holes were bored to fit the lamp holder bracket. Increased brilliance results but now I get a rainbow effect on the screen.—*J.H.*

You would do well to provide a sliding plate in the lamp house so that you can adjust the lamp both backwards and forwards and also, to a certain extent, laterally. The lamp filament should be exactly square on to the

(*Continued on next page*)

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Replies to Readers

(Continued from previous page)

condenser, i.e., the plane of the filament width at right angles to the optical axis. The rainbow effect may be due to the mirror and condenser being out of adjustment with each other. Your best course will be to consult your local dealer, who will be able to examine the machine itself and possibly see at a glance just where the trouble lies. It is almost impossible to solve the problem without examination.

TITLE EXPOSURES ON 8mm. POS.

J.R.G.—If both the lettering and the background are muddy, then at some stage your film must be getting fogged. We suspect that your darkroom illumination is either far too bright, your darkroom lamp filter is not correct (too yellow instead of being amber or orange) or you are examining the film during processing at an " unsafe " distance from the light source. In order to test this assumption, shoot a short test strip with 2 x 100 watt lamps at an aperture of f/3.5 and at f/4.5, and then develop the film in the dark for about 2½ mins. at 68°F., rinse and fix for 2 minutes. The Gevaert G.251 formula is a standard type of M.Q. positive developer and should give perfectly good results. Low background density is probably due either to insufficient development or to development at too low a temperature. Keep to 65° to 68° F. for developers containing hydroquinone, as this chemical becomes inert at lower temperatures.

CLOSE-UP WORK

I am using an Emel Camera C61 with 12.5mm. lens, and wish to use it at full aperture (f/2.5) at a distance of 6 ft.

I believe the hyperfocal distance is 30 ft. and presume an object at 6 ft. would not be in sharp focus. I have obtained a lens piece distance number 3 (a piece of metal which fits between the lens and film) so that I can focus down to 18 ins. Is it possible, by working on this principle and using a thinner gauge of metal, to be able to focus to 6 ft. ? How can I make an accurate frame to fit the viewfinder to correct for parallax at this distance ?—*A.B.*

Your idea of using a thinner slip of metal (similar in principle to that for the very close focussing) for working at 6 ft. should be perfectly satisfactory. The calculations for this are rather complicated ; we could suggest that you obtain one or two pieces of thin " shim " steel, say 2, 4 and 6 thousandths of an inch in thickness and cut out new slips, and then make practical tests on some object at the required distance. The object would take the form of a target, i.e., ruled lines on a white background, so that the accuracy of focus could be more easily checked on projecting the film.

In order to overcome the difficulty of parallax compensation it would be advisable to provide a new wire frame finder with a movable back-sight to it. The proportions of this finder will be those of the size of the cine-picture or frame in relation to the focal length of the lens. By setting out the width and height of the cine picture on paper and drawing lines from the extremities of these dimensions to the focal point of the lens (make the drawing many times larger in order to avoid possible inaccuracies) the " angle of view " can be found. With this information, the correct size of the finder can be found. An 8mm. frame measures 5mm. in width by 3.6mm. in height, with 12.5mm. as the focal length of the lens.

The back-sight of the finder should have as small a hole as possible (on the principle of a rifle sight) and if the front frame of the finder is level horizontally with the axis of the lens, then the sight must be capable of being moved from left-to-right or vice versa. If, on the other hand, the front wire frame is immediately above the axis of the lens, then the back-sight must be capable of being moved up and down. If it is not possible to fix the new finder axis in either of these two positions, then the back-sight will have to be capable of being moved diagonally towards the axis of the lens.

By far the best method of " calibrating " the back-sight for the correct position for various distances is to set up the camera on a rigid support and to run a short practical test on the end of your next roll of film with various fields-of-view marked out and the back-sight set in different marked positions.

MODEL BOMB EXPLOSION

G.I.B.—Since fireworks are now no longer available it seems that you will have to produce the explosion mechanically. The model will have to be blown apart by the releasing of a number of springs set up inside it and released either by strings from behind, or by electrical contacts such as magnets. This will take care of the disintegration of the factory, and the flash could probably be arranged by means of ordinary photographic flash powder, or even a " flash-bulb " fired off at the same time or just before the internal springs are allowed to work. Some rag soaked in turpentine will give you a fairly realistic flame and dense smoke effect. The scene should preferably be filmed in semi-slow-motion, so that it will approximate more nearly to the real thing.

We should not advise you to attempt to varnish your films after processing, but preferably to treat them in a special acid-fixing-and-hardening bath after second development or blackening. Such a bath can include chrome alum or formalin, as preferred. On the other hand, you can use one of the proprietary brands of emulsion-toughening agents such as those supplied by Johnson's of Hendon, and Gevaert, Ltd. (Chemicals Dept.). Films treated in any of the ways suggested should stand up well to all ordinary usage in projection without becoming brittle, always provided, of course, that they are stored in proper humidor cans on reels.

PRINTING SHORT LENGTHS

T.B.H.—Your camera can readily be used as a printer. In the darkroom, you will have to wind a length of negative and unexposed positive film, emulsions together, on to one reel. The two films are then threaded through the gate, the negative being placed on the side next the lens, and attached to the take-up. The lens should be removed and the camera set up a foot or two from an electric lamp so that the light shines into lens mount and the gate, exposing the film as it runs through the camera. The correct exposure will have to be determined by trial ; the easiest way to vary it is by varying the distance between the camera and light.

You will find that it is only possible to use about ten feet of film at a time, as the two films will not run off the top reel evenly, nor will they take-up evenly. The inner film, i.e., the positive, takes a shorter path on the reel than the outer film, with the result that the latter tends to loop and jump the sprockets. If you are contemplating doing a lot of printing, it might be worth while to cut a slot in the back of the camera (providing a cover for normal use) and providing separate reels for the positive film. These would be cased in, of course, and some sort of drive could be rigged up for the take-up. In this way fifty and a hundred foot reels could be printed, quite accurately.

UNREMOVED BLUE BACKING

I used to have my films trade processed, thinking that the secret procedure for the reversing from negative to positive originated in the kind of baths used. As I am a seaman much time was lost before the finished film reached me again ; so I tried to develop the exposed film myself, and was astonished that it contained no tricks.

I wound the film round a cigar box, from which bottom and cover were removed, and got nice results from the beginning. The finished positive was nicely transparent, but the last three films were not at all transparent, showing a dark blue background. Would you please advise me where the fault is possibly to be found : is the bath to blame, or the celluloid, or what else ? I must add that, having no projector at hand, I do not know the result on the screen.—*A. de K.*

It seems that you have not cleared the dense blue dye backing used as an anti-halation layer. Methylated spirits or carbon-tetrachloride will dissolve this backing and leave the acetate base quite clean. The work of removing the backing, by passing the film through a folded piece of very soft material soaked in the solvent, should preferably be done out-of-doors or in a well ventilated shed, in order to avoid the unpleasant fumes of these solvent spirits.

CINE CAUSERIE

(*Continued from page 63*)

principle for eye viewing (Fig. 5), using it "one-eye-at-a-time." In one respect it is better than the simple "one-eye" card (Fig. 1) as the pointers can be left in position and a check made to see that there has been no error from movement of the outstretched arm. Also, the eye can be concentrated on the object, the reading of the scale being taken at leisure. But the pivots were merely small brass paper fasteners and tended to loosen in the card, and I came to the conclusion that this "meter" was unnecessarily elaborate.

All that was needed was a simple scale, such as that first described (Fig. 1) together with some means for marking the point on the scale so that the distance could be checked during viewing and the scale read at leisure afterwards. Fig. 7 was the result. It is just a strip of stout card with an extension of about three inches to the right of the scale ; so that it can be held between the fingers in the same way as an artist takes a measurement with a pencil.

Capricious Results

At first I merely marked the distance along the scale with the thumb, as the artist does, but discovered that I got rather capricious results. I also found that a scale of dark colour did not give quite the same reading along the card as did a white one. Also, a scale with a pointed end did not give quite the same reading as one with a square end. These peculiarities are no doubt due to the fact that both the thumb and the end of the scale are seen out of focus when the distant object is viewed.

So I made a slider to move along the scale, with an inked arrow on the left edge of the slider and another arrow at the left end of the card. The slider was a piece of stiff linen adhesive tape wrapped round the scale, with the join stuck together along the back. This was not easy to move with the thumb so I pushed a brass paper fastener through the linen, from outside the slider, near to the left edge. This was done, of course, before the back of the slider was joined together.

The "legs" of the paper fastener were opened and pressed flat, so that one "leg" extended beyond the left edge beyond the arrow. This was cut off with a pair of old scissors. The right "leg" was bent up at the tip, about an eighth of an inch from the end, and the point was pressed through the linen tape, so that it formed a sharp point on the front surface of the slider. In use this sharp point slips beneath the nail of the thumb and the slider can be moved easily. A midget paper fastener through each end of the scale prevents the slider from falling off when not in use. At twelve feet it gives consistent readings, accurate to within a few inches.

In my trials I attempted to make a scale on a propeller pencil, but found that greater accuracy was obtained with a very narrow strip. So I tried the results on a fairly fine knitting needle, black, with the end cut square. This is accurate, robust and easier to handle than the cardboard "meter," but as the scale would require to be engraved I rested content with the cardboard one.

A distance meter is very useful at times, but—a six foot rolled metal rule is much better when it can be used. Mine cost sixpence, but I doubt if they are now obtainable at a great deal more. So this cardboard meter may prove of value to others.

Regional Libraries

(*Continued from page 59*)

types are only make-shift and fail to satisfy the teachers because they lack the continuity and vivid presentation which can be achieved by the special technique of silent film."

One cannot fail to note the implication that the films made by amateurs are of poor quality, although doubtless one should in fairness take into account the added implication that they are poor films *for teaching purposes* and not necessarily badly produced films. Even so, it may well be wondered if the teacher is not as much to blame as the amateur. He cannot pay the library fees and expect to get something as good as the library film for next to nothing ; further, if the commercial organisations (which should have facilities for making contacts with the teaching profession and ascertaining its requirements) cannot supply the goods, is it

(*Continued on next page*)

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Ensign Super Kinecam, Sixteen Turret, Cinar f/1.5 and f/2.6 lenses, leather case, pan and tilt tripod, £25, or near. Course, 4, Station Road, Sandiacre.

Victor 16mm. Camera, Model IV, turret head. 3 Dallmeyer lenses, 1in. f/2.9 (and filter), 15mm. f/2.9, 3in. f/4, wide-angle viewfinder attachment, leather case. One owner, careful handling, excellent condition, recently serviced and overhauled. £35 complete. C.B., Prior's Court, Chieveley, Newbury.

very surprising that the amateur has also failed ? If the teaching profession would make contact with existing amateur organisations, instead of merely voicing their dissatisfaction with the supply and quality of amateur films, positive results would be more likely to be achieved.

As one solution to the problems the B.F.I. recommend the setting up of a fairly large number of regional libraries and thus creating a constant demand for new prints. It is thought that if the producer of a five-minute simple silent film for juniors, made with the advice and help of teachers, could be certain of selling twenty prints when he had completed it, he would not hesitate to undertake the task. If this scheme is thought to be practicable—and there seems to be no reason why it should not be—would not a similar scheme, designed to foster the circulation of good amateur films, be even more so, for there are certainly more projectors in the hands of amateurs than there are in the schools ? Many amateurs would, we feel sure, be glad to participate in both ventures after the war. The planning should be done now.

Secrets of the Studio

(*Continued from page* 65)

Ice is usually supplied by contractors, who lay special pipes, but when small effects are required, or close-ups of people falling into water through the ice, the water is sprayed with paraffin wax.

Blood which trickles through the fingers as they are held to the wounded part of the body, is only liquid make-up which comes from a rubber finger-stall concealed in the palm of the hand.

Carrick also describes such processes as the Dunning, and Schufftan, glass and model shots, backings and other 'effects' with which readers of our recently concluded series of articles by George Pellinore on trick work will be familiar. A valuable part of the book are the many illustrations which show designs by well-known art directors, including the author, the sets built from them and various plans and camera set-ups.

Sketch plans, perspective, camera angles, elevations, furniture, flats, the work of the floor manager, acoustics, shadows are all dealt with, with much else besides. And how much, on the average, does a set cost in labour, materials and props ? The modern 'middle-class' set, says Carrick, works out at about 1s. 3d. to 2s. per cubic foot, according to the studio it is built in.

FOR SALE

Bolex G916 Projector ; model convertible for sound, 2½in. lens, transformer. One owner, careful handling, excellent condition. Special carrying case. £45 complete. C.B., Prior's Court, Chieveley, Newbury.

Pathe "Super Vox," 9.5mm. Sound Film Projector, 400 watt model. List £104, accept £85. New. Also several sound films, stamp for list. Roberts, Rural Structures, Amersham.

New Unused Pathe 200B Lamp, 110v., 200w. Exchange with cash for new Bolex Lamp 400w., or sell £1. "Greenbanks," Kenilworth Close, Banstead.

Free Lists : 16mm. Sound and Silent Films ; also glass beaded perforated screens (sound). Royal Sutcliffe, 305, Killinghall Road, Bradford. 'Phone 8547.

9.5mm. Sound Films. Private library of over sixty subjects for sale from 30/- per reel. Little used, new this year. S.A.E. for list. Roberts, Rural Structures, Amersham.

Bolex D.A. Dual Projector. Complete. Resistance Case. Scarcely used. Absolutely new. Offers. Wallis, 61, Grand Avenue, West Worthing.

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If you possess a 16mm. Talkie Outfit which we can Hire with Services—Send details to—ISTEAD CINEMATOGRAPH SERVICE (ROAD SHOWS), 4, COLONNADE PASSAGE, BIRMINGHAM, 2.

Bolex Sound Projector Wanted for cash or exchange Amprosound "U" Model, 15-30 watts output, as new. 17, Kenwyn Avenue, Blackpool. **Wanted—16mm. Kodak XX Film,** near dated. Offers to Hallam, Playhouse, Louth, Lincs.

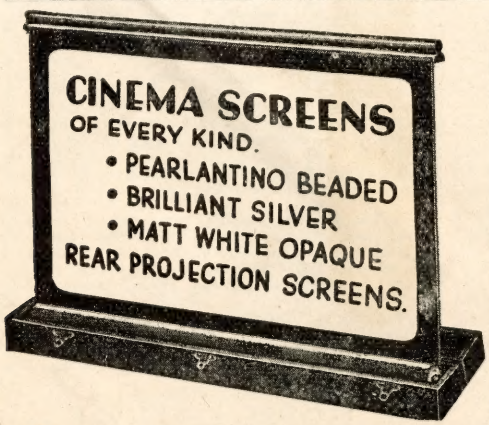
Wanted—16mm. Sound Projector of good make. Would exchange Pathe Vox complete with spare lamp. Dekko camera 3.5 lens with Dallmeyer Telephoto f/4, and Ross 1.9 focussing. Also several 9.5 sound and silent films and 900 and 400 ft. empty reels. Crabb, 1a, Market Place, Pontefract.

Wanted. Talkie Bolex 16mm. and 9.5mm. model. Secondhand preferred. State price and condition. Cash. Box No. 561, c/o Amateur Cine World, 324, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

Wanted—Projector (silent or talkie) and films. Cash guaranteed on sight if suitable. Penrose (Cine) Ltd., 69, Streatham Hill, S.W.2. Tulse Hill 6756.

Lens, 2½ in. for Filmosound Projector, 120J Model wanted. Perfect condition. Storey, "Pleasantry," Ponteland, Northumberland.

Siemens Cine Camera, Model F2, with Vario Glaukar lens wanted. New condition. Must be reasonable. Approval. Storey, "Pleasantry," Ponteland, Northumberland.



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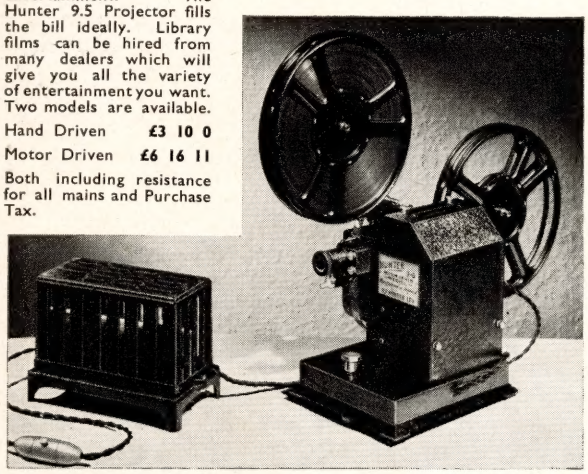

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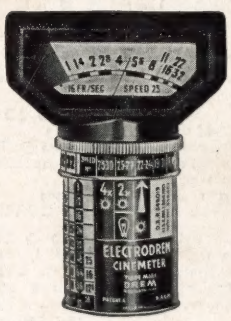

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